

TURNING FEMINIST PROGRESS  
INTO LASTING CHANGE

# FEMINIST SCORECARD 2019

TRACKING GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ADVANCE  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY



# Turning Feminist Progress into Lasting Change Feminist Scorecard 2019

Tracking government action to advance women's rights  
and gender equality

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Oxfam is a global movement of people working to end injustice and poverty.  
Our mission is to build lasting solutions to poverty and injustice while improving  
the lives and promoting the rights of women and girls.

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# INTRODUCTION

When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government took power in November 2015, it promised to transform the lives of women and girls through feminist policy-making and inclusive growth. This was an opportunity to make real progress on the twin struggles of gender and economic inequality, both in Canada and abroad. Inspired by this promise, Oxfam Canada decided to track the government's action to deliver on its bold agenda.

Feminist Scorecard 2019 is the third in this Oxfam Canada series. It assesses the steps that the government took between March 2018 and February 2019 to make meaningful progress towards achieving women's rights and gender equality. Progress is assessed across eight policy areas: representation and leadership; global development; climate change and extractive industries; care work; gender-based violence; tax; conflict and crisis; and jobs and pay equity.

Three years in, the government's efforts have undoubtedly started to pay off. Just this past year there have been many wins for feminists to celebrate, including the passage of landmark pay equity and gender budgeting legislation, the creation of the Department for Women and Gender Equality and its broadened intersectional mandate, the doubling of federal funding to support the Canadian women's movement, and the decision to put gender equality at the heart of Canada's G7 presidency.

The government launched its much-anticipated and lauded poverty reduction strategy and then tabled the *Poverty Reduction Act*, which includes the first official poverty line and the creation of a National Advisory Council on Poverty. With a vision of a Canada without poverty, and referencing Canada's human rights

obligations and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the strategy outlines clear targets to reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030. Charities also celebrated a big win in 2018 when the government changed course and amended the *Income Tax Act* to protect free speech for Canadian civil society. Bill C-86 included new rules permitting charities to carry out unlimited public dialogue and development activities in furtherance of a stated charitable purpose. The importance of these steps cannot be overstated.

Unfortunately, new initiatives and comprehensive strategies to advance women's rights and gender equality, often the result of consultative processes, too often fell short of the mark because they lacked the resource allocations required to achieve meaningful and long-lasting impact. Gender-based analysis has been incorporated across federal departments and agencies to support evidence-based policy-making. Bold budget decisions are now needed in order to act on this evidence and make a real difference in the lives of women and girls. The Federal Strategy on Ending Gender-Based Violence, the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, and the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)—to name just a few—will fail to deliver on their promises unless they receive the major budget increases they require.

Over the past three years, the government has laid the foundation for a more equal and inclusive Canada, and we congratulate it for its steadfast and unwavering commitment to feminist policy-making. Looking toward Budget 2019, the government can cement its legacy by injecting the funds needed to turn feminist progress into lasting change.

# METHODOLOGY

There is no one single change that will transform the lives of women living in poverty and struggling to realize their rights. The barriers that women face and the opportunities they lack stem from complex, intersecting and long-entrenched systems of inequality and discrimination. A holistic approach that addresses a myriad of interconnected factors is therefore required in order to make real progress toward gender equality.

Oxfam Canada's Feminist Scorecard 2019 presents a feminist assessment of the Canadian government's progress on gender equality and women's rights over the one-year period between March 2018 and February 2019. Eight policy areas are assessed:

- 1 Representation and leadership: Investing in women's leadership and gender-based analysis
- 2 Global development: Global leadership on women's rights
- 3 Climate change and extractives: Tackling climate change and regulating extractive industries
- 4 Care work: Investing in the care economy
- 5 Gender-based violence: Ending violence against women and girls and sexual and gender-based violence
- 6 Tax: Building a progressive tax system
- 7 Conflict and crisis: Responding to humanitarian crises and building lasting peace
- 8 Work and pay equity: Addressing the unequal economics of women's work

Each of the policy areas includes an analysis of three key indicators according to which progress is assessed.

The Feminist Scorecard 2019 focuses on decisions made by the Canadian government between March 2018 and February 2019. The Scorecard does not offer a comprehensive analysis of every policy decision

this government has made that has an impact on women and gender equality, nor does it reflect the state of women's rights in Canada or globally. Rather, it presents an assessment of the actions that have, or have not, been taken by the government in these eight policy areas. It is, in the simplest of terms, a snapshot of the volume and quality of action taken by the federal government during this specific time period.

Policy areas are rated using a traffic light range (red, yellow and green), indicating very little, some, or significant progress. In recognition that meaningful change requires time and sustained investments, key recommendations for action are outlined at the end of the sections on each policy area.

A more in-depth analysis of the policy areas covered by the Feminist Scorecard, in addition to an articulation of the feminist principles that guide Oxfam Canada's work, can be found in a number of recent publications, including:

- [Tackling Inequalities in the Global Economy: Making Canada's foreign policy work for women](#) (2017)
- [Oxfam Canada's Feminist Principles: What they are and how they serve as a guidepost for our work](#) (2018)
- [Leadership on and investments in a feminist future: Oxfam Canada's recommendations for Federal Budget 2019](#) (2018)
- [A Feminist Approach to Localization: How Canada can support the leadership of women's rights actors in humanitarian action](#) (2018)
- [Protected and Powerful: Putting resources and decision making power in the hands of women in conflict](#) (2018)
- [A Feminist Approach to Women's Economic Empowerment: How Canada can lead on addressing the neglected areas of WEE](#) (2019)



GREEN = SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS



YELLOW = SOME PROGRESS



RED = LITTLE PROGRESS

# FEMINIST SCORECARD 2019

## WHAT ACTION has THE GOVERNMENT TAKEN to ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS and GENDER EQUALITY?



### REPRESENTATION & LEADERSHIP

The government continues to be a staunch advocate for women's leadership and inclusion. It made gender a key priority of Canada's G7 presidency and it met two important milestones in 2018: the creation of the Department for Women and Gender Equality and the doubling of federal funding to support the Canadian women's movement.



### GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Canada continues to show global leadership through its Feminist International Assistance Policy, its funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and its support for feminist and women's rights organizations in developing countries. This leadership is crucial, but Canada's persistently low levels of official development assistance undermine its ambitious agenda.



### CLIMATE CHANGE & EXTRACTIVES

Federal climate action was a mix of progress and setbacks this year. Accomplishments such as putting a price on carbon emissions and facilitating the transition away from coal-fired power were counteracted by billions in government spending to expand fossil fuel infrastructure. As well, the government has not yet appointed an ombudsperson to curb business-related human rights abuses internationally.



### CARE WORK

Women continue to carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care, making it difficult to pursue decent work and educational opportunities. The government has made some incremental progress with its Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, but much greater investments are needed to move toward a child care system that is truly accessible for all families in Canada.



### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The government has made good progress on its Federal Strategy on Ending Gender-Based Violence, but women who experience violence do not all have the same access to services or protection across Canada. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has continued to be mired in controversy, and the UN has called upon Canada to investigate allegations of forced sterilizations of Indigenous women.



### TAX

The government made real progress by enshrining gender budgeting in legislation, which helps ensure that fiscal policy responds to women's intersecting needs and advances gender equality. A review of the tax system is needed in order to find a better balance between personal and corporate taxes, close tax loopholes, and get rid of regressive income tax measures that hurt women and people living on low incomes.



### CONFLICT & CRISIS

Canada has solidified its reputation as a leader on women, peace and security, and has invested in gender-responsive humanitarian action. To truly move this forward, the government will need to break down silos between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work and fund more local women's rights actors in emergency settings. It should also ensure that Canada's trade and defence policies do not undermine progress in peacebuilding.



### JOBS & PAY EQUITY

The government met a major milestone in 2018 with the passing of the Pay Equity Act to address the wage gap in federally regulated sectors. It also made some changes to employment insurance and the Labour Code which will advance women's economic equality. More is still needed to ensure women everywhere in Canada, in all their diversity, have access to decent work and living wages.



# 1 INVESTING IN WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP

## Score: green

Policies are best when they are informed by the people they affect, yet women and other marginalized groups are under-represented in politics and decision-making around the world. Many social and cultural barriers continue to stand in the way of representation and leadership. Currently, worldwide, only 21 women are serving as heads of state or heads of government, only 24% of all national parliamentarians are women, and as of late 2018 there are 29 states in which women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians, including four chambers with no women at all.<sup>2</sup> This continued under-representation of women in decision-making positions, coupled with the capture of political decision-making by elites, results in policies and public spending decisions that are devoid of gender-based perspectives or, worse, that contribute to reinforcing women's economic inequality and social marginalization.

Justin Trudeau named Canada's first gender-balanced cabinet in 2015 and has maintained gender balance throughout subsequent cabinet shuffles. Despite the substantive and symbolic importance of this decision, women still only account for 27% of all Members of Parliament in Canada.<sup>3</sup> At the current rate of progress, it will take another century to hit parity between women and men.<sup>4</sup>



As Minister of Foreign Affairs [...] I will always promote equal representation and respect for the rights of women and girls, as well as access to leadership positions and equal opportunities at home and abroad.

— Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup>



## REPRESENTATION & LEADERSHIP

Women around the world are looking to Canada for leadership on gender equality and women's rights at a time when many hard-won gains are being threatened. The government continues to be a staunch advocate for women's leadership and feminist approaches to policy-making. This was particularly evident during Canada's 67 presidency, which was marked by many firsts, including the first Gender Equality Advisory Council and the first feminist W7. The new full-fledged department dedicated to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality (WAGE) was another major milestone, along with the doubling of the budget of the Women's Program, which provides critical resources for feminist and women's rights organizations across Canada.

Feminist and women's rights organizations have been critical drivers of progressive change and have been behind many of the hard-earned gains in women's rights worldwide. Despite doing the heavy lifting, they are chronically underfunded. In Canada, deep funding cuts under the previous government severely undermined the capacity of feminist and women's organizations to mobilize, offer frontline services to women, and get at the root causes of discrimination and inequality, including for women who are poor or marginalized or who experience discrimination on multiple grounds. The government's recent decisions to increase funding for feminist and women's rights organizations have helped the movement begin to rebuild, but these organizations will require long-term, sustained support to continue advocating for change and providing critical services.

## Walking the talk:

### **POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND PRIORITIES:**

Since beginning its mandate, the government has highlighted women's leadership and has made a commitment to gender-based analysis across the government. Women continue to hold senior positions in the Cabinet. In December 2018, the new Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) became a full department under the law with a broadened mandate for gender equality that includes sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.<sup>5</sup> It is positive that the department's mandate includes a strong intersectional lens recognizing the full range of diversity. At the same time, the department should not lose sight of women's particular challenges and intersecting barriers in fulfilling their social, political and economic rights. The budget for WAGE to undertake gender analysis and women's programming is larger than its predecessor's (Status of Women Canada), and includes a commitment to \$350 million in new funding by 2022–23.<sup>6</sup> Budget 2018 announced further support to the department by committing \$7.2 million over five years to lead a national conversation on gender equality with young Canadians, and \$1.8 million over two years to develop a strategy on engaging men and boys. If done well, these initiatives could

make a meaningful contribution to gender equality in Canada.

On the global stage, Canada demonstrated leadership by making gender a key priority of its G7 presidency. The Prime Minister appointed the first G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council to ensure that gender equality and gender-based analysis are integrated across all outcomes of the G7. Canada's G7 presidency also included the first-ever feminist W7, which brought together over 60 feminist activists from the Global South, G7 countries and across Canada to identify priorities for G7 leaders in terms of advancing gender equality and women's rights. The Prime Minister, the Minister of International Development and the Minister of Status of Women all attended the W7. Canada also hosted the first-ever Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting in September, to which a delegation of women human rights defenders from across the globe was invited. The meeting made space for these defenders and Canadian feminist activists to make recommendations directly to the ministers.

Canada also sends a strong signal to the world through its diplomatic corps: 44% of top Canadian diplomats in 2017 were women, including three of the six heads of mission to G7 countries. However, women still only make up 36% of the top two levels of the Foreign Service and there are low levels of representation of women of colour and francophones, among others.<sup>7</sup>

**GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS:** In November 2018, the government held a national roundtable on gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) that had a significant turnout from across government and high-level participation. Budget 2018 committed \$6.7 million over five years, and \$0.6 million per year ongoing, to Statistics Canada to create a new Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics. Further investments in evidence-based policy-making for gender equality include the announcement of \$1.5 million over five years, and \$0.2 million per year ongoing, to the Department of Finance to work with Statistics Canada and WAGE to develop a broader set of indicators and statistics to measure and track Canada's progress on achieving shared growth and gender equality



objectives. Budget 2018 also proposed \$5 million per year for WAGE to undertake research and data collection in support of the government's Gender Results Framework and the integration of gender-based analysis into policy-making across the government. The government has also committed to comprehensively incorporate gender-based analysis in Cabinet documents and Treasury Board submissions, as well as in government consultation, budgeting, reporting and evaluation.

**SUPPORT FOR FEMINIST AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS:** Budget 2018 announced \$100 million over five years for WAGE to support feminist and women's rights organizations in Canada. This is positive and represents significant progress: until recently there was virtually no federal funding for feminist and women's rights organizations. Despite the significant increase to the Women's Program over the past two years, the women's rights movement in Canada remains underfunded and too many organizations are scrambling to provide services without having access to core funds to sustain their operations. Feminist and women's rights organizations and movements require core institutional support, organizational strengthening and resources with which to build alliances and provide services and support. The funding model of dispersing grants based on project cycles is not sustainable for delivering quality programming, and leaves organizations vulnerable to financial shortages in between projects. Also, it is essential that feminist and women's rights organizations have access to funding to support their policy and advocacy work as well as resources to organize and mobilize for change.

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Encourage the recruitment of women in politics by enacting legislative measures and other formal actions to encourage political parties to increase the number of women recruited and elected in Canada. Ensure that policies are in place throughout the government to recruit and appoint women to leadership positions within the bureaucracy, including women from underrepresented groups like Indigenous women, women of colour, immigrant women, LGBTQI people, and women with disabilities.
- Continue to increase the budget of the Department of Women and Gender Equality until investment reaches \$100 million per year to allow the department to fulfil its important mandate of ensuring that federal policies benefit women and other marginalized groups more equally. Increase WAGE's Women's Program budget by an additional \$20 million a year, and create a funding stream that provides core funding for feminist and women's rights organizations.
- Ensure that GBA+ is not just a technical tool but that it also allows for diverse women's participation and the inclusion of their voices in the policy-making process. Similarly, ensure that an intersectional lens is applied to all gender-based analysis and ensure that women who are most systematically marginalized—Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, refugee and LBTIQ people and women with disabilities— are supported and resourced to participate in budget processes so that policies are responsive to their realities and address their unique challenges.

## 2 GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

### Score: green

We live in an increasingly unequal world. Left unchecked, growing inequality threatens to pull our societies apart and undermine the fight to end poverty. Gender inequality is one of the most widespread and pernicious forms of inequality worldwide. Women around the world continue to earn less than men, have unequal access to resources and education, and are under-represented in decision-making. Ending poverty will only be possible when women and girls around the world can realize their rights. Religious fundamentalism, economic and political turmoil, nationalism and backlash against feminism are rolling back the gains made by feminist and women's movements. In many countries, conservative and nationalist political forces portray women's rights and LGBTIQ rights as products of Western interference. The realization of women's rights requires continued action and leadership.

Canada has made significant policy and financial commitments to supporting a feminist approach to development through its Feminist International Assistance Policy. Given the state of our world, this leadership is crucial, but the resources required to deliver on the ambition of this policy must not be underestimated. Canada's persistently low levels of official development assistance (ODA) undermine its credibility and will hamper its bid for a UN Security Council seat. Looking beyond international assistance, the government has shown feminist leadership in its foreign policy on several occasions, but has yet to apply a feminist approach consistently across aid, trade, defense and diplomacy to address the



### GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Women around the world disproportionately experience poverty and discrimination, and political backlash threatens hard-won gains. Canada has shown global leadership through its Feminist International Assistance Policy and has made significant commitments to advancing gender equality, investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights, and funding feminist and women's rights organizations and movements. Given the state of our world, this leadership is crucial, but the resources required to deliver on the ambition of this policy must not be underestimated. Canada's aid investments continue to be significantly lower than some of its global peers.



We know that the empowerment of women and girls makes us all safer and is a central part of resolving [...] key international crises [...]. That is why Canada has a feminist foreign policy.

— Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>8</sup>

systemic and structural inequalities that create gender inequality and to stand firm against the backlash against women's rights that is occurring in parts of the world.

## Walking the talk:

**FEMINIST AID AND FOREIGN POLICY:** The government's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which commits to promoting gender equality in order to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world, was a major milestone for this government. A year and a half in, some important progress has been made in terms of implementation through, for example, the Women's Voice and Leadership Program, significant support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and stronger requirements for gender equality results in programming. Changing how Canada designs and delivers aid will take time, and more work remains to be done. In early 2018 the government conducted extensive consultations to develop policies on the FIAP's six thematic "action areas" which are intended to give clear guidance to staff at Global Affairs Canada on how to implement the FIAP; but these policies have not yet been finalized. Global Affairs Canada's 2017–18 report to parliament on ODA states that 99% of new bilateral aid targeted or integrated gender equality.<sup>9</sup> However, it is still unclear whether data interpretation or changes in project coding played a role in achieving this surprisingly rapid progress.<sup>10</sup>

The government has applied a human-rights-based approach to several high-profile foreign policy decisions over the past year, for example speaking out in support of imprisoned women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia despite diplomatic and economic retaliation from the Saudi regime.<sup>11</sup> Another commendable example is the Canada-Chile trade agreement, which came into force in 2018 and includes a gender chapter that acknowledges the importance of ensuring that economic growth benefits everyone.<sup>12</sup> While laudable, these positions were not taken as part of a broader feminist foreign

policy, which results in a lack of consistency and means that commitments can easily be scaled back. For example, when the cabinet was shuffled in July 2018, Minister Carr's mandate letter as Minister of International Trade Diversification contained no reference to the "progressive trade agenda" that had been listed as a top priority for the previous two ministers of international trade.<sup>13</sup> This underscores the importance of having a formal feminist foreign policy that provides consistency and coherence throughout all areas of foreign policy: aid, trade, defense and diplomacy.

**SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS:** Canada is delivering on its commitment to invest \$650 million in funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in developing countries from 2017 to 2020.<sup>14</sup> Several new initiatives were announced over the past year, including \$104.4 million in funding for projects that include universal access to family planning and access to safe and legal abortion, and \$67.8 million for SRHR in emergencies.<sup>15</sup> Canada stepped up leadership on global LGBTQI rights with a new commitment of \$30 million in dedicated funding over 5 years, followed by \$10 million per year, to advance human rights and socioeconomic outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in developing countries. Canada has also been championing SRHR in diplomatic circles, through the International Conference on Family Planning, G7 engagements, co-chairing the intergovernmental Equal Rights Coalition to advance LGBTQI rights, and by co-hosting the 7th International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Canada will also be hosting the Women Deliver Conference in June 2019 to bring high-level attention to gender equality and SRHR. Since current SRHR funding commitments expire next year, it is important that the government take action now to sustain Canada's role as a global leader beyond 2020. This will require renewed and additional financial investments, continued global leadership and a willingness to prioritize the neglected areas of SRHR such as advocacy, safe abortion care, comprehensive contraceptive care, adolescent SRHR (including comprehensive sex education) and SRHR in emergencies.

**INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE BUDGET:**

Federal Budget 2018 made a welcome commitment to an additional \$2 billion in ODA over five years, demonstrating a recognition that Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy will require additional resources. However, Canada's total spending on international assistance in 2018 is estimated to have been \$5.37 billion,<sup>16</sup> and despite the announced increase, Canada will still be spending only 0.26% of gross national income on international assistance in five years—well behind other donor countries such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, and a long way from the UN aid target of 0.7%.<sup>17</sup>

Despite repeated encouragement from civil society, the government is showing no sign of wanting to increase Canada's aid budget further. In speeches relating to its UN Security Council bid, for example, the government has instead emphasized its efforts to leverage private sector financing to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>18</sup> Private sector funding comes in different forms and can certainly be innovative and impactful. For example, in May 2018, the government announced that it would be committing up to \$300 million to a new funding initiative which aims to mobilize resources by leveraging funding from philanthropists and the private sector.<sup>19</sup> The fact that this initiative will focus on supporting women's movements and organizations—which are deeply under-resourced—is laudable. Private sector finance, however, does not have the same quality guarantees as ODA under Canada's *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, which must explicitly contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspective of the poor, and meet international human rights standards. Leveraging alternate sources of funding does not absolve the government of its responsibility to increase ODA, and Canada's low levels of ODA could undermine its credibility and leadership on the international stage and be an impediment to securing a seat on the Security Council in 2020.

**Moving forward, the government should:**

- Release a feminist foreign policy that is rights-based and coherent across all areas of foreign policy: aid, diplomacy, trade and defence.
- Release the Feminist International Assistance Policy action area policies and guidance notes to give staff at Global Affairs Canada clear direction on how to implement the FIAP and ensure that the FIAP's ambitious agenda cannot be easily reversed or stalled.
- Implement a progressive trade agenda by conducting human rights and gender equality assessments of current and future trade agreements, including gender chapters in all trade agreements, investing in training for Global Affairs Canada staff on gender and trade, and committing funding to increase the voice and participation of women, including the most marginalized, in trade agreements and policy-making.
- Invest a minimum of \$500 million per year over 10 years in the neglected areas of SRHR as part of a \$1.4 billion renewed commitment to global health beyond 2020. In addition, establish a global policy on SRHR and continue to demonstrate leadership on SRHR in intergovernmental, donor-led and diplomatic spaces.
- Develop a 10-year plan to achieve the UN aid target of 0.7% of gross national income. The government should also ensure that FinDev Canada, along with other development financing initiatives, is subject to the same principles as the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*.

### 3 TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND REGULATING EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

#### Score: yellow

In October 2018, climate scientists on the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a dire warning: the world has only 12 years to make “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities in order to avert runaway climate change.<sup>21</sup> While climate change will affect everyone, the poorest and most marginalized in society will suffer the greatest consequences in spite of having contributed the least to creating the problem. Greater effort must be made to include women on the front lines in global climate change negotiations considering their leadership in adaptation efforts, often against extraordinary odds.

The oil, gas and mining industries are major contributors to climate change and they can pose serious human rights risks to local communities. Well-documented instances of human rights violations and environmental harm have been associated with the international operations of some Canadian extractive companies.<sup>22</sup> The majority of the world’s mining and mineral exploration companies are registered in Canada, which places the government in a unique position to raise global industry standards on human rights. Women and men experience the impacts of extractive industries very differently—from forced displacement to water contamination to sexual violence by security guards. Those who experience such abuses often have few mechanisms for seeking remedy or redress.



We know women and girls are particularly at risk when it comes to climate change, and (...) women are also at the forefront of bold climate leadership around the world.

— Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change<sup>20</sup>



#### CLIMATE CHANGE & EXTRACTIVES

Our global economy based on rampant consumerism and the depletion of natural resources is reaching a breaking point. Women are on the front lines, facing increased risk from our changing climate and the harmful human rights and environmental impacts of some extractive projects. As one of the highest per-capita emitters of greenhouse gases and a global hub for the extractive sector, Canada urgently needs to up its game on climate action and corporate accountability.

Federal climate action was a mix of progress and setbacks this past year. Accomplishments such as putting a price on carbon emissions and facilitating the transition away from coal-fired power were counteracted by billions of dollars in government spending to expand fossil fuel infrastructure at home and abroad. The government has not yet delivered on its promise to appoint an ombudsperson to curb business-related human rights abuses internationally.

## Walking the talk:

**CLIMATE ACTION:** The government continues to hold fast to its commitment to bring carbon pricing to Canada despite political headwinds from some provincial premiers. Carbon pricing backstop legislation came into effect in January 2019 to ensure provinces or territories that choose not to introduce their own pricing mechanism will be subject to the federal one. Based roughly on a fee-and-dividend model, revenues are distributed back to the citizens of each province in which they were raised. Despite this progress in implementing a price on carbon and other measures in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the federal government's reputation as a climate leader took a huge hit in 2018 with its controversial purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline for \$4.5 billion from US multinational Kinder Morgan. The Federal Court of Appeals subsequently struck down the project's approvals, ruling that the National Energy Board had failed in its duty to adequately consult Indigenous peoples and take into account impacts on some marine wildlife.

In international climate negotiations, Minister McKenna raised hopes prior to the 2018 UN climate change summit when she told Canadians that the government was prepared to increase its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets under the Paris Accord. However, she did not make any formal commitment to a new target at the summit, which could have encouraged other nations to do likewise. In a more positive direction, Canada has demonstrated leadership in the global effort to phase out thermal

coal and coal-fired power generation. Working with labour and business leaders, the government is supporting a just transition for coal industry workers and their families.

**GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTIONS:** The government continues to make strides in integrating gender-based analysis into its climate and energy commitments. Legislative reforms to the federal environmental assessment process (Bill C-69) are currently under review in the Senate. If enacted, the bill would mandate gender-based analysis in federal impact assessments to ensure project proponents consider how health, social and economic impacts affect women and men differently and may need to be mitigated accordingly. The legislation would represent major progress in promoting more inclusive and gender-responsive economic developments. At the global level, the government delivered its first report under the Gender Action Plan in the UN climate change negotiations process, but the Plan was largely a restatement of existing initiatives. Minister McKenna hosted the Climate Leaders' Summit: Women Kicking It on Climate in May as part of Canada's G7 presidency, but it did not target clear outcomes for Canada's future work on promoting a feminist vision for climate action.

**GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES:** High hopes for the appointment of a new independent Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, announced by the Minister of International Trade in January 2018, have fallen as the position remains unfilled over a year later. The Minister promised an office with robust investigatory powers to compel testimony and documentation from companies facing allegations of human rights abuses. There is an urgent need to create the new office, as human rights defenders are experiencing rising threats in various parts of the world. Women human rights defenders are on the front lines defending land and environmental rights threatened by extractive projects.

The Voices at Risk guidelines around how Global Affairs Canada can support human rights defenders are surprisingly devoid of a gender-based perspective and weak around the specific risks associated with

business and human rights. Many problematic trade promotion policies created under the previous government, such as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy for Canada's international extractive sector, remain in place. The government should replace its outdated CSR strategy with a business and human rights framework that centres on the protection of rights and that is coherent with the government's commitment to feminist approaches. Since the Feminist International Assistance Policy was launched in 2017, hardly any new projects have been funded to support community groups and women's rights organizations to build awareness, document abuses and rights violations, and access justice in relation to the extractive industry. At the same time, the Canadian mining sector operates in more than 100 countries around the world and receives more than \$10 billion in federal government support annually through Export Development Canada (EDC). Currently EDC's governing legislation contains no explicit requirements regarding human rights or gender considerations.

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Adopt more ambitious national commitments for greenhouse gas reductions before the 2019 UN climate change summit, in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scenarios to keep global average temperature rise below 1.5°C. Increase contributions to global climate financing and achieve a 50-50 balance between funding going to adaptation initiatives and mitigation initiatives. Also, more funds should be made available to the least developed countries, specifically to those most vulnerable to climate change, and these funds should be allotted in particular to women-led initiatives.
- Continue to implement all measures of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and establish a legislated mechanism to conduct annual monitoring and evaluation to track the attainment of Canada's targets. Ensure that comprehensive gender-based analysis of social, economic, health and environmental impacts is mandated in federal impact assessments.
- Appoint the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise with a strong mandate on gender justice and adequate investigatory powers to address the business and human rights challenges associated with Canadian investment abroad.
- Strengthen Global Affairs Canada's Voices at Risk guidelines to respond to the unique risks facing women human rights defenders in all their diversity, including women working on land and environmental rights that are threatened by extractive projects.
- Include gender equality explicitly in the mandate of Export Development Canada, and establish stronger accountability and transparency measures in the *Export Development Act* to prohibit transactions that risk violating human rights or environmental or anti-corruption standards.

## 4 INVESTING IN THE CARE ECONOMY

### Score: yellow

Responsibility for unpaid care work is one of the biggest hurdles to women's economic equality. Women around the world spend 16.4 billion hours a year doing housework and taking care of children and sick and elderly family members. If this amount of work was carried out by a single company, it would make an annual profit of \$13.2 trillion, 43 times that of Apple. Yet, unpaid care work keeps many women trapped in poverty by preventing them from pursuing employment and educational opportunities. It not only hurts women but has major implications for economic growth.

In Canada, millions of families with young children struggle financially and are forced to make difficult tradeoffs between expensive child care and full-time employment. This struggle is particularly pronounced for women: lack of affordable, accessible and quality child care is the biggest contributor to the gap between men's and women's labour force participation and to the gender wage gap. It hurts women's earnings and opportunities, and also has major implications for the Canadian economy. Poor women that experience various forms of discrimination face even greater barriers. Both the International Monetary Fund<sup>24</sup> and the McKinsey Global Institute<sup>25</sup> have provided evidence on the economic benefits of closing the gap between men's and women's labour participation in Canada. Investing in a publicly funded early learning and child care system is the surest way to reduce women's burden of unpaid care work, thus enabling women to enter the job market. Yet, Canada has some of the highest child care costs and some of the lowest investments from among all OECD peers.<sup>26</sup>



I am very proud that we have now arrived to a successful agreement to help Canadian children and families have access to affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care. Through this agreement we are giving Canadian children the best possible start in life and providing support to families who need it the most.

— Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development<sup>23</sup>



### CARE WORK

Women continue to carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work in Canada and around the world, making it difficult to pursue decent work and educational opportunities, and often trapping them in poverty. The government has made some incremental progress toward meeting the goals of its Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, having reached bilateral agreement with all the provinces and with First Nations, but much greater investments are needed to move toward an early learning and child care system that is affordable, accessible, inclusive and of high quality for all families in Canada.



## Walking the talk:

**CHILD CARE:** Budget 2018 failed to grow investments for initiatives in early learning and child care. As it stands, the investment of \$7 billion over 10 years announced in Budget 2017 will not make child care significantly more accessible or affordable for all Canadians, especially since the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care promotes a targeted, rather than universal, approach.<sup>27</sup> Minister Duclos announced in January 2019 that the government is on track to create 40,000 more affordable child care spaces by 2020, with already more than a third of the target achieved in 2017–2018.<sup>28</sup> But considering that an estimated 776,000 children live in child care deserts,<sup>29</sup> i.e. communities where at least three children compete for each licensed spot, and that child care in the most expensive regions of Canada comes at a median monthly cost of \$1,700 for infants and \$1,200 for toddlers, much more is needed to ensure all families have access to the services they need.<sup>30</sup> Advocates continue to call for a plan to reach the international benchmark of 1% of GDP invested in child care, and to put in place a publicly-funded and -managed child care system that is supported by a national policy framework, long-term sustained funding and conditional transfers between federal and provincial governments.<sup>31</sup>

**SHIFTING THE CARE BURDEN:** Budget 2018 introduced a new Parental Sharing Benefit by which parents can opt for additional weeks of “use it or lose it” parental benefits if they share the leave. The benefit will take effect in June 2019. This new measure seeks to encourage the second caregiver, typically a father, to share care responsibilities within the household by having the option of taking five or eight weeks of leave at 55% or 33% of earnings (capped at a maximum annual insurable earning of \$53,100) respectively. These are welcome changes as paternity leave plays an important role in redistributing unpaid work in the household and

shifting traditional gender norms.<sup>32</sup> However, the low levels of benefits represent a barrier to accessibility that will likely hamper the success of this new initiative. Advocates had hoped that the federal government would take Quebec’s lead in increasing benefits and eligibility. Quebec’s five weeks of father-only leave (70% of earnings, capped at a maximum annual insurable earning of \$76,500) have resulted in 78% of men taking parental leave in the province, compared to 27% in the rest of Canada.<sup>33</sup>

**DECENT WORK FOR CAREGIVERS:** Of the roughly 190,000 people who make up Canada’s early childhood education and care workforce, 96% are women.<sup>34</sup> These are some of the lowest-paid workers in Canada, working long hours with little job security or benefits. Racialized and immigrant women fill the ranks of the lowest-paid and most difficult care jobs, working in areas such as special needs and senior care. The International Labour Organization recently released a report predicting a massive shortage of care workers because public investments in the care economy do not match demand.<sup>35</sup> Canada currently fills this labour shortage by attracting migrant workers, far too many of whom face precarious and abusive situations because their closed work permits are tied to a single employer. This type of permit makes them vulnerable to abuse as they work in isolated workplaces not subject to occupational health and safety inspections. In February 2019, the government announced two new 5-year caregiver immigration pilot projects to address some of these challenges, representing a major win for migrant caregivers.<sup>36</sup> The new pilots will allow caregivers to come to Canada together with their families and provide a pathway to permanent residency. Those already in Canada will also have the opportunity to stay in Canada permanently. Under this pilot project, caregivers will have an occupation-specific rather than employer-specific work permit, which will allow them to change employers more easily if needed. It will be important to ensure the longevity of these changes beyond the 5-year pilots.

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Commit to a \$1 billion investment in child care in Budget 2019 to be transferred to the provinces, territories and Indigenous communities. This amount should grow by \$1 billion each subsequent year until total spending on early learning and child care reaches the minimum benchmark of at least 1% of GDP or until the goals of universally accessible, affordable, inclusive, high-quality child care are met. The federal government should also adapt a workforce strategy and legislation that lays the foundation for a national child care system based on the principles of universality, quality and comprehensiveness.
- Increase access to and amounts of parental benefits and increase the duration of second caregiver leave.
- Ratify International Labour Convention 189 on the protection of domestic workers.

# 5 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## Score: yellow

Gender-based violence is a global crisis of epidemic proportions. Globally, one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. In Canada, one in two women have experienced harassment in the workplace and it is estimated that intimate partner violence and sexual violence cost the Canadian economy \$12.2 billion annually.<sup>38</sup> Violence against women and girls knows no boundaries of geography or culture, but those living in poverty face higher levels of abuse. Indigenous women are six times more likely to be killed than non-Indigenous women.<sup>39</sup> Other populations, such as transgender people, women with disabilities and elderly women, are also at higher risk.<sup>40</sup> The impact of violence has repercussions on all areas of a person's life—including their mental, physical, social and economic well-being.

No country or culture reports having eliminated violence against women and girls, and changing deep-rooted social norms requires a long-term commitment. Addressing gender-based violence will require policies and legislation that help to deter harmful practices and provide accountability for perpetrators and justice for women, girls and transgender people who have experienced violence. Also, investments and action at the community

“We know that some groups within Canada, including Indigenous women and the LGBTQ2 community, experience gender-based violence at higher rates than others, and we will continue to ensure that our efforts serve these populations.

— Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, Minister of Health<sup>37</sup>



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is devastating the lives of millions of women and girls around the world. It's a global crisis that must be tackled head-on with sustained leadership and investments. The government has made good progress in implementing the Federal Strategy on Ending Gender-Based Violence but more is needed to ensure that women have equal access to services and protection no matter where they live in Canada. Improved access is particularly critical for Indigenous women, who are at much higher risk of violence. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has been mired in controversy and shortcomings, and the UN has called upon Canada to investigate allegations of modern-day forced sterilizations of Indigenous women.

level are needed alongside strong partnerships with feminist and women's rights organizations and community influencers to help change the social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence and prevent laws from being implemented.

## Walking the talk:

### FEDERAL STRATEGY ON GENDER-BASED

**VIOLENCE:** Budget 2018 included the important announcement of new initiatives and funding to support organizations fighting for an end to gender-based violence, protecting children from sexual exploitation on the internet, ending gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions, fighting human trafficking, and collecting data through a national survey on gender-based violence. In December of 2018, the Minister of Status of Women Canada launched the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children, housed within the Department of Women and Gender Equality, to coordinate government action on prevention, support for survivors and families and the promotion of responsive legal and justice systems. WAGE also launched \$5 million in funding for GBV research to support evidence-based policy and programming including initiatives that are Indigenous-led or co-created.

While some progress continues to be made through the implementation of the Federal Strategy on Gender-Based Violence, the reach of the strategy is limited to federal jurisdiction and therefore cannot fill critical and ongoing gaps in access to services and protection for women across the country. Women fleeing violence across different Canadian regions and jurisdictions do not all have the same access to services or protection,<sup>41</sup> and women's rights advocates continue to call for a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women that responds to the multiple forms of discrimination that women experience and recognizes the needs of the most marginalized.

### SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN:

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has been mired in controversy and shortcomings. The government granted an extension to the Commissioners until April 2019 to submit their report in order to hear from additional families and survivors, examine institutional practice and undertake research. The Native Women's Association of Canada continues to follow the Inquiry's progress and has mixed reviews.<sup>42</sup> While some commitments have been met, many areas identified little to no progress, including on transparency and accountability, positive community relations that put families and survivors first, meaningful engagement and compensation, and respect for the cultural diversity and traditions of Indigenous peoples. Progress includes steps taken toward commemoration, including the launch of a commemoration fund announced by WAGE to provide \$10 million over two years to honour the lives and legacies of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people.

Allegations of modern-day forced sterilizations of Indigenous women were brought to light in December 2018 by the United Nations Committee against Torture, which called on Canada to investigate. A class action lawsuit against Saskatchewan and its health authorities and medical professionals was filed on behalf of 60 women who have come forward to report they were sterilized against their will. The government must recognize forced sterilization as a gross violation of women's reproductive rights which is rooted in systemic violence against Indigenous peoples, and ensure access to safe and culturally appropriate medical services.

**COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION:** Access to information and public awareness about gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to claiming and exercising rights. Sexual health is a fundamental aspect of an individual's overall health and well-being. When effectively developed and delivered, comprehensive sex education provides information and skills that contribute to healthy

relationships and have positive impacts on individual health, public health and gender equality. It also contributes to preventing gender-based violence and bullying, and empowering youth. Currently, there are significant discrepancies in access to information about sexuality across Canada. While education is a provincial jurisdiction, the federal government has a role to play in eliminating discrepancies across jurisdictions, increasing access to quality and comprehensive sex education, and establishing benchmarks through which curricula can be assessed and strengthened.

The Public Health Agency of Canada will be updating and releasing new Guidelines for Sexual Health Education in 2019. Facilitating access to these guidelines for educators and adolescents would provide them with evidence-based information and overcome some of the barriers created by the unequal delivery of sexuality education across jurisdictions. Quality and comprehensive sex education is critical to achieving Canada's efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence, empower women and girls, achieve public health goals, address rising rates of sexually transmitted infections, support healthy relationships among young people, create a culture of consent, and ensure the safety and acceptance of LGBTQI children and youth.

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Develop a comprehensive, coordinated national action plan to prevent and address gender-based violence. The plan should cover the federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments and their governance. The plan should address the structural factors causing inequality and violence and should include targets, timelines, indicators and resources for implementation. It should also recognize the multiple intersecting forms of discrimination that lead to higher risks of violence and should be informed by the experiences of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ and Indigenous people.
- Sustain and scale up investments in shelters and other services for women experiencing violence, including at the provincial level.
- Implement the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Ensure transparency, accountability and a family- and survivor-centred and culturally appropriate approach to implementation, through collaboration with families and Indigenous communities.
- Investigate allegations of forced or coerced sterilizations in Canada, with particular attention to Indigenous women and girls, and apply measures to ensure criminal accountability, justice and reparations to survivors and families.
- Have the Public Health Agency of Canada, together with the Department of Women and Gender Equality, co-develop a national campaign on healthy relationships and sexuality based on the updated Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. A national campaign would support equalizing access to information, given the discrepancies in access to sexuality education across jurisdictions.

## 6 BUILDING A PROGRESSIVE TAX SYSTEM

### Score: yellow

Around the world, the underfunding of public services and a general failure to crack down on tax dodging by large corporations and the wealthy have fueled inequality for decades. Women and girls are doubly hit by rising economic inequality as they lose access to essential public services and are left to fill these gaps with many hours of unpaid care work.

In Canada, tax cuts over the past two decades have reduced federal revenues by \$46 billion annually. Canada's system of income tax expenditures and loopholes is expensive—costing over \$100 billion annually—and predominantly rewards the wealthy.<sup>44</sup> Men benefit more than women from the persistence and expansion of these tax loopholes, while women lose out more from the lack of funding for public services, both as public service workers and as primary caregivers. In addition, women lose far too much after-tax income as the result of the many joint tax and benefit provisions built into the Canadian and provincial/territorial fiscal systems.

The wealth of Canadian billionaires grew by almost \$20 billion between 2017 and 2018.<sup>45</sup> The Canada Revenue Agency estimates that wealthy individuals avoid paying between \$0.8 and \$3 billion annually due to international tax havens,<sup>46</sup> with some putting this figure much higher. Corporate tax avoidance is an even bigger problem; estimated tax revenue losses range between \$10 and \$15 billion per year.<sup>47</sup>



To ensure that gender remains a key consideration for future governments, the Government will [...] introduce new GBA+ legislation to make gender budgeting a permanent part of the federal budget-making process.

— Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance<sup>43</sup>



### TAX

A progressive tax system is key to tackling economic inequality, closing the gender gap and raising more revenue for public services. The government has made great strides in integrating gender analysis into the budget process, enshrining it in legislation and improving the evidence base for policy-making. However, the government cannot deliver on its feminist agenda without adequate financial resourcing. More investments will require more resources, which is why effective and gender-equal taxation policy must be a priority in order for the government to deliver on the its ambitious agenda.

## Walking the talk:

**GENDER BUDGETING:** The federal government has taken substantial leadership in advancing gender budgeting, enshrining it in legislation with the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* in December 2018 and improving the evidence base for policy-making. The law makes gender budgeting official government policy; requires gender and diversity to be considered in taxation, resource allocation and all other fiscal decisions; and includes annual public reporting on gender budgeting by both the Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board. This is an important step in ensuring that all components of fiscal policy respond to women’s needs and advance gender equality. Unfortunately, the law does not include any specific provisions that secure or fund public participation in the gender budgeting process. Advocates continue to call for greater representation of women’s rights and gender diverse organizations in this process. For example, in the pre-budget consultation process for Budget 2019, the House of Commons Finance Committee did not highlight gender-based analysis as one of its thematic priorities for the consultation, nor did feminist and women’s rights groups make up a significant portion of the witnesses selected to appear before the committee. The newly expanded Department of Women and Gender Equality is tasked with capacity-building for government departments to engage in gender budgeting; it will require some significant investments to get the civil service up to speed.

**CLOSING TAX LOOPHOLES:** At the start of its mandate, the government sought to fulfill its campaign promise to review and eliminate wasteful and regressive tax loopholes and expenditures, beginning by reversing the regressive family income splitting measure and the expansion of Tax-Free Savings Accounts. However, the government’s review of tax expenditures was purely internal and it quickly backed off on plans to eliminate or reduce the stock option tax loophole, the most regressive and egregious tax loophole. Plans to clamp down

on the use of private corporations to avoid taxes were also scaled back when the government encountered opposition from a coordinated business lobby. Since then, the government appears to have abandoned efforts to close significant domestic tax loopholes.

Tackling tax evasion requires increased transparency and cooperation with tax authorities in other countries. Canada continues to implement the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting. However, it is critical that Canada champion a second generation of global tax reforms that brings all countries on an equal footing, especially developing countries, which have the most to gain. Budget 2018 proposed the introduction of enhanced income tax reporting requirements for certain trusts starting in 2021. Opaque corporate structures facilitate tax avoidance, which has prompted calls for the creation of a publicly accessible registry of beneficial ownership. Finance Minister Morneau and provincial and territorial counterparts have agreed to work together to strengthen beneficial ownership transparency in Canada. Any Canadian registry system must be open and publicly accessible.

**PROGRESSIVE TAX SYSTEM:** Following a decade of corporate income tax cuts, corporations now account for a mere 14.4% of federal tax revenues, while personal income taxes make up 49%. Returning the corporate income tax rate back to higher levels is urgently needed to begin rebalancing the Canadian tax system. Personal income tax rates continue to be too high for those with low incomes and too low for those with high incomes, who also have access to myriad tax benefits and tax expenditures. Over the past few years, the government has made efforts to simplify the tax system and remove “boutique” tax measures that were inefficient and disproportionately benefited wealthier Canadians. However, many Canadians—particularly low-income and vulnerable individuals and those living on reserve and in remote communities—continue to face challenges in accessing new progressive tax benefit programs, such as the Canada Child Benefit. The government has made some progress with automatic enrolment for some of these programs

and support for filling tax forms, but a more comprehensive proactive approach is needed to ensure people get the benefits they are entitled to. The tax base could be further expanded by investing in high-quality universal child care, which has been shown to grow the economy and increase female workforce participation.<sup>48</sup>

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Set up an advisory council on gender budgeting that includes diverse representation from feminist and women's rights organizations. The advisory council should assist the government in increasing its capacity to do gender budgeting, making the process more inclusive and setting clear gender equality priorities and targets for all upcoming federal budgets.
- Require the Standing Committee on Finance to ensure that at least 15% of witnesses in the pre-budget consultation hearings are representatives of feminist and women's rights organizations, and provide guidance for all submissions to include gender-based analysis.
- Commission an independent review of the tax system, including gender-based impact analysis, to find a better balance between personal and corporate income taxes, close inefficient tax loopholes, identify regressive income tax measures that hurt women and others living on low incomes, and allocate the tax burden according to the principles of ability and fairness. Any tax review and reform exercise must involve extensive and meaningful public consultation with representation by a broad group of stakeholders, including women's organizations and diverse groups.
- Raise more revenue by increasing the corporate tax rate from 15% to 21% and cracking down on tax loopholes, aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion by the wealthy and corporations. Introduce public country-by-country reporting of multinational corporations' financial and tax information and public disclosure of the true or beneficial owners of corporations, trusts and other assets.
- Champion a second generation of global tax reforms at the UN level that put all countries on an equal footing and tackle the key problems not addressed by the first phase of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting initiative.



# 7 RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND BUILDING LASTING PEACE

## Score: yellow

With 70 ongoing civil wars, an increasing number of extreme weather events, and 68.5 million people displaced, the world is facing humanitarian crises on an unprecedented scale. These crises are particularly difficult for women and girls, who face increased risk of violence and exhausting workloads to ensure their families survive, and who often lack full control over decisions that affect their lives and their bodies. Humanitarian responses often fail to address women and girls' specific needs and challenges since women are not adequately involved in discussions on how aid is delivered. While these crises can present opportunities for women to demonstrate leadership and transform gender roles, gender-blind humanitarian interventions have often failed to capitalize on these opportunities. Evidence shows that women's participation in peace processes significantly increases the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and implemented.

The Government of Canada is continuing to show global leadership on women, peace and security and on finding sustainable solutions to the global displacement crisis. It is also making efforts to promote women's rights in humanitarian crises through fora like the G7 and the Global Call



## CONFLICT & CRISIS

Canada has solidified its reputation globally as a leader on women, peace and security, and has invested significantly in gender-responsive humanitarian action. To realize a truly feminist approach to humanitarian assistance, though, the government will need to break down silos between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work and fund more local women's rights organizations in emergency settings. The government should also commit to do more to help the world's most vulnerable refugees and ensure that Canada's trade and defence policies do not undermine progress in peacebuilding.



Too often, donors focus solely on supporting basic services like water, food and shelter, and overlook the particular challenges faced by women and children, some of whom are survivors of sexual- and gender-based violence. This is not sustainable as humanitarian crises become increasingly protracted and complex.

— Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development<sup>49</sup>

to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. More deliberate work is needed to transform the way Canada delivers humanitarian assistance and to adequately resource its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

## Walking the talk:

**PEACE AND SECURITY:** The government continued to champion the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and in September 2018 announced the creation of Canada's first ambassador for WPS, who will provide advice on the implementation of Canada's National Action Plan on WPS.<sup>50</sup> It also announced more than \$25 million in projects that support women's efforts to play a greater role in the stabilization of their communities and countries. In 2020, Canada will be co-chairing a meeting of the WPS Focal Points Network, a cross-regional space to share experiences and best practices on the implementation of the WPS agenda.<sup>51</sup> Canada's legislation to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Bill C-47, was finalized this year. While this progress towards ATT accession is positive, the final legislation contains several loopholes. For example, it will not prevent Canada from selling arms to Saudi Arabia, which is engaged in a devastating war in Yemen that has resulted in the world's largest humanitarian crisis and taken an enormous toll on women. The government's feminist foreign policy commitments will be undermined if its international trade decisions are not guided by the same goals.

**STANDING WITH REFUGEES:** Canada showed global leadership in 2016 by resettling 45,000 Syrian refugees. The government's refugee resettlement numbers then returned to historical levels in 2017, and the 2018 target for government-assisted refugee resettlements was 7,000,<sup>52</sup> which is below the annual average of government-assisted refugee arrivals between 2000 and 2015.<sup>53</sup> This notwithstanding, the government deserves credit for its efforts to build global support for community-based refugee sponsorship, along with like-minded countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Argentina, Spain and New Zealand.<sup>54</sup>

In June 2018, the government helped engineer a bold rescue operation for Syrian White Helmet volunteers threatened by Syrian government troops, and has now resettled 19 workers along with their families, a total of 117 people.<sup>55</sup> Canada also made international headlines when it provided asylum to a young woman from Saudi Arabia who had fled abuse and was stranded in Bangkok.<sup>56</sup> The government championed the Global Compact for Refugees and Migration toward its historic adoption in the fall of 2018. In the face of rising xenophobic and racist rhetoric in many parts of the world, including the USA where migrant family separation made the headlines this year, Canada should continue to promote openness and tolerance, and signal that the US's treatment of migrants and refugees is unacceptable by withdrawing from the Safe Third Country Agreement.

Canada's Sponsorship of Parents and Grandparents program made headlines in January 2019 when the 27,000 online application spots for bringing parents or grandparents into the country were filled in under 11 minutes.<sup>57</sup> There is a feminist argument for making it easier for immigrants to sponsor these family members, who can provide untold emotional and childcare support, which can help their newcomer sons and daughters, particularly single mothers, enter the workforce.

**HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE:** The government invested \$852 million in humanitarian assistance this past year.<sup>58</sup> For the first time, this money came from a dedicated pool of funding for humanitarian assistance. This positive change helped ensure that funding for unforeseen emergencies did not reduce the core development assistance envelope that is crucial to implementing the Feminist International Assistance Policy. The government made use of Canada's G7 presidency to spearhead a \$3.8 billion investment in education for women and girls in conflict and crisis situations, with a commitment to \$400 million in Canadian funding over three years.<sup>59</sup> It also promoted its gender-responsive humanitarian agenda in diplomatic spaces, encouraging G7 countries to make commitments through the Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action,<sup>60</sup> and assuming the leadership of the Call to Action on Protection from

Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.<sup>61</sup> The government made significant contributions to the Rohingya crisis where the gender inequalities are particularly striking.<sup>62</sup> It also invested \$68.7 million in sexual and reproductive health services in humanitarian sectors—a crucial and often neglected area.<sup>63</sup>

Despite this encouraging progress, some obstacles still stand in the way of Canada’s ambition to lead the world on a feminist approach to humanitarian assistance. For one, Canadian humanitarian organizations and their partners find it difficult to secure funding for gender-focused programming in emergency contexts. The Canadian government prioritizes proposals that align with the main sectors of humanitarian action, which do not include gender since meaningful progress towards gender equality requires longer timelines than other humanitarian interventions.<sup>64</sup> Canada also funds far too few local women’s rights actors in humanitarian action. Yet these organizations are crucial players: they deliver assistance in culturally appropriate ways and can integrate their humanitarian work with their long-term efforts to achieve gender equality. To tackle these lasting problems, Canada needs a feminist humanitarian strategy and a dedicated pool of funding for gender equality in fragile contexts that spans the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.<sup>65</sup>

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Announce dedicated and additional resources to ensure the impact and success of Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Swiftly appoint an ambassador for women, peace and security and ensure the ambassador has a strong mandate and a well-resourced office.
- Suspend the transfer of light armoured vehicles to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen and the risks that Canadian exports will be used to perpetrate serious violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law.
- Increase the number of government-assisted refugees and continue to prioritize groups or individuals who are most vulnerable to harm, such as women, children and members of the LGBTQI community. This assistance should go alongside efforts to speed up family reunification and repeal the Safe Third Country Agreement with the USA.
- Launch a feminist humanitarian policy that reflects a comprehensive approach to humanitarian assistance and commits to supporting local women’s rights actors across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
- Establish a dedicated pool of funding for gender-transformative programming in fragile and conflict-affected states. This pool should provide long-term, flexible and sustainable funding, particularly for local women’s rights actors.

## 8 ADDRESSING THE UNEQUAL ECONOMICS OF WOMEN'S WORK

**Score: yellow**

Nowhere in the world do women earn as much as men. This is not by coincidence: the economy is stacked against women, no matter where they live. Sexist social norms result in women's work being less paid and less valued than that of men. Around the world and in Canada, women are disproportionately represented in the lowest paid and most precarious jobs, trapping many in poverty. Women also shoulder a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care which leaves them with less time to spend on educational opportunities and engage in paid work. In turn, this results in women having a harder time reaching the eligibility threshold to access employment insurance and other social protections. In Canada, over 670,000 women who want to work full-time are stuck in part-time, casual and temporary jobs.<sup>67</sup>

The gender wage gap in Canada has not decreased in decades, hovering at 32% on average and as much as 45 to 55% for Indigenous women, immigrant women and women with disabilities.<sup>68</sup> Economic inequality and gender inequality are inextricably linked and must be tackled together. Given the government's stated priorities of inclusive economic growth and gender equality, it should place women's economic security and equality front and centre in its policy agenda, and specifically prioritize the most vulnerable women: Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, refugee and LGBTQI people and women with disabilities.



### JOBS & PAY EQUITY

Women in Canada and around the world are disproportionately concentrated in the lowest paid and most undervalued jobs and earn significantly less than men. Multiple layers of discrimination further exacerbate the economic insecurity of Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, refugee and LGBTQI and women with disabilities. The government met a major milestone in 2018 with the passing of the Pay Equity Act to address the wage gap in federally regulated sectors. It also made some changes to employment insurance and the Labour Code which will advance women's economic equality. Yet more is needed to ensure women everywhere in Canada have access to decent work and living wages.



Proactive pay equity is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

— Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour<sup>66</sup>

## Walking the talk:

### LIVING WAGES AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE:

The government's unwillingness to take measures to ensure living wages for all federal employees and contractors means that it now lags behind two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, that are striving to move minimum wages toward living wages. This inaction represents a missed opportunity for the government to demonstrate its commitment to inclusive growth and gender equality, especially since 60% of minimum wage earners in Canada are women. The revamped Canada Workers Benefit which was introduced in Budget 2018 is a good step for supporting low-income earners. The benefit, which builds on the Working Income Tax Benefit, will increase maximum benefits by an additional \$170 per year starting in 2019 and low-income earners will automatically receive this benefit if the Canada Revenue Agency determines their eligibility. The government estimates that an additional 300,000 Canadians will now receive the benefit, which would help lift approximately 70,000 Canadians out of poverty. The government also made some changes to the employment insurance program to make it more accessible, including making the "working while on claim" employment insurance pilot project permanent, and extending it to include maternity and sick leave benefits as well. Considering that employment insurance benefits are often too low for women living in poverty, this will allow them to earn additional income without losing their benefits.

**PAY EQUITY:** The government finally passed proactive pay equity legislation in the fall of 2018 as part of the second budget implementation act. The 2018 *Pay Equity Act* applies to all public and private sector employers with more than 10 employees under federal jurisdiction, as well as to federal contractors.<sup>69</sup> Under this act, employers must proactively develop pay equity plans within three years (to be updated every five years) and make these publicly available in the workplace. Employers with more than 100 employees must

also establish a pay equity committee. Following wage comparisons, employers are obliged to make payments to rectify pay gaps within three years after the employer is subject to the act. The act also establishes a Pay Equity Commissioner whose role is to monitor implementation of the act and provide assistance and research around pay equity issues. Moreover, the act outlined a five-step enforcement process starting with the Pay Equity Commissioner and ending with a decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Despite this positive move towards closing the gender pay gap, pay equity experts had several concerns regarding the legislation and were disappointed with the lack of thorough consultations before the passing of the law. No date was set for the act to become effective and it could be many years before women are actually compensated for equal pay violations. Furthermore, the act lacks a clear human rights statute in that the purpose clause prioritizes employers' needs over employees' human right to equal pay for work of equal value. Moreover, experts had hoped that the Pay Equity Commissioner would be an independent body, rather than housed in the underfunded and slow Human Rights Tribunal.

In addition to this legislation, the government also initiated nationwide consultations on pay transparency.<sup>70</sup> The government aims to improve transparency around the pay practices of employers in federally regulated sectors to highlight employers leading in equitable pay practices while holding less progressive employers accountable for wage gaps.

**DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN:** The government updated the federal labour standards in 2018 to ensure workers in the federally regulated private sector have a robust and modern set of labour standards.<sup>71</sup> The changes enhanced eligibility for protections and entitlements, including amendments to support work-life balance, provided five days of paid leave for victims of family violence, and enhanced benefits for employees in precarious work. This is a welcome move that sets a new standard for labour rights protections. The government also announced the appointment of

an expert panel on the changing nature of work to further study issues related to federal labour standards including minimum wage, labour standards for workers in non-standard employment and collective voice for non-unionized workers. Investments have so far focused on encouraging more women to enter the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) sectors, and much less on improving working conditions and employment opportunities in sectors that predominantly employ women, such as health and social services. The government could also be doing more to hold Canadian companies operating abroad accountable for labour rights violations, including in their supply chains. As it stands, workers have few avenues to lodge complaints and access justice for violations, and companies are not required to report on their gender and human rights impacts throughout their supply chains..

## Moving forward, the government should:

- Ensure that women earn living wages by raising the minimum wage for workers under federal jurisdiction and awarding federal contracts only to living-wage employers.
- Increase resources to ensure swift implementation of the 2018 Pay Equity Act, work with civil society pay equity experts to ensure that regulations are enacted quickly, and enforce pay equity as a human right.
- Incentivize businesses to unionize by prioritizing unionized businesses in procurement.
- Extend the mandate of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise to cover all economic sectors and require Canadian companies operating abroad to monitor and report on gender and human rights impacts, including within their supply chains.

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