



Government  
of Canada

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du Canada

Canada

# Gender Equality: A Foundation for Peace



## CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

2017-2022

For the Implementation of the  
UN Security Council Resolutions  
on Women, Peace and Security

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## LETTER FROM THE MINISTERS

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If we want global peace and security, we must involve women in every aspect of it—from conflict prevention, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance to post-conflict recovery and statebuilding.

Many women are courageous defenders of human rights and fearless negotiators for peace—and yet women are rarely positioned to prevent, manage and end conflict.

The reasons are clear: in conflict settings, women face particular threats. They must often defend themselves against sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual and reproductive health services can be hard to find. Women human rights defenders are harassed, detained—even murdered. Women have been sexually exploited and abused by peacekeepers and other international personnel who are supposed to protect them.

Today's status quo—marked by unequal power relations and discriminatory social norms, practices and legal systems—keeps women and girls from influencing processes that profoundly affect them.

As well, the nature of conflict has changed; civilians, humanitarian workers and civilian infrastructures are deliberately targeted. Humanitarian crises can last for decades, and so can displacement. Many conflicts are also linked to violent extremism and ideologies that subjugate women and girls.

We must see women as survivors, not victims, of conflicts; women can lead us from conflicts and prevent conflicts. The stories of women in conflict situations are both heartbreaking and inspirational. We must harness their resilience, their determination and their innovative solutions to end conflict.

The path to peace needs empowered women because:

- Where women are included in peace processes, peace is more enduring.
- Where women are included in the economy, economic growth is greater.
- Where women are included in governance, states are more stable.
- Where women are included in security, everyone is safer.
- Where gender equality is upheld, societies are more peaceful.<sup>1</sup>

The 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals recognize the solid link between peace, respect for human rights, economic development, inclusive governance and institutions, and gender equality.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) address women's challenges in conflict situations and women's potential to influence global peace and security. Canada's National Action Plan (the Action Plan) is the Government of Canada's response to these resolutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie M. Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace*, 2012.

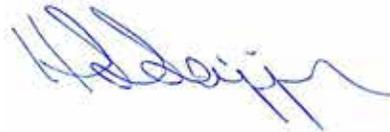
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The Action Plan is at the heart of Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy that includes its Feminist International Assistance Policy and Defence Policy. The 2017-2022 Action Plan will help implement these policies with an integrated, whole-of-government approach to our engagement in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.



*The Hon. Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Canadians want more gender equal and stable societies, and we will focus our resources to make that happen. We hope the 2017-2022 Action Plan inspires our international partners to work with us to support women in creating an inclusive and peaceful world.



*The Honourable Harjit Singh Sajjan  
Minister of National Defence*



*The Honourable Maryam Monsef  
Minister of Status of Women*



*The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
of Canada*



*The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau  
Minister of International Development  
and La Francophonie*



*The Honourable Ralph Goodale  
Minister of Public Safety and  
Emergency Preparedness*



*The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
DND	Department of National Defence
GBA+	Gender-based Analysis Plus
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PS	Public Safety Canada
PSOPs	Peace and Stabilization Operations Program
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWC	Status of Women Canada
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WPSN-C	Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada is committed to gender equality, to empowering women and girls around the world and to promoting their human rights and well-being. Canada is also committed to preventing and responding to conflicts to help build a more peaceful and prosperous world. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is at the intersection of these commitments. Implementing a whole-of-government approach to advance the global WPS agenda is a priority for Canada.

Recognizing the important role of civil society in advancing the WPS agenda internationally, the government is increasing its support to local women's groups and movements, working toward achieving gender equality and the human rights of women and girls.

Harmful practices and social norms, including among women, that uphold gender hierarchies and other intersecting forms of marginalization and exclusion or condone violence are often exacerbated during conflict. Canada recognizes that women and men must be equally committed to changing attitudes, behaviours and roles to support gender equality. This is why Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy requires engaging men and boys, alongside women and girls, as agents and beneficiaries of change in peace and gender equality.

Canada's National Action Plan (the Action Plan) 2017-2022 contains the Government of Canada's specific commitments to advance the WPS agenda.

Lead partners for the Action Plan are Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Supporting partners are Public Safety Canada (PS), Status of Women Canada (SWC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Department of Justice.

Partners for the Action Plan describe in separate implementation plans how they will contribute to the following objectives:

- Increase the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and networks in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict statebuilding.
- Prevent, respond to and end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated in conflict and sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and other international personnel, including humanitarian and development staff.
- Promote and protect women's and girls' human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.
- Meet the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings, including the upholding of their sexual rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Strengthen the capacity of peace operations to advance the WPS agenda, including by deploying more women and fully embedding the WPS agenda into CAF operations and police deployments.

A Theory of Change illustrates how specific actions contribute to these objectives and to meeting Canada's commitments under the UN Security Council's resolutions on WPS.

In developing the 2017-2022 Action Plan, the Government of Canada has consulted with civil society, in particular the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C). This input has been invaluable, and the Government of Canada is committed to strengthening this collaboration.

# THE CONTEXT FOR ACTION

Two billion people live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.<sup>2</sup> Overcoming insecurity and achieving sustainable peace are daily concerns for these communities. Women and girls suffer disproportionately in these conflict settings but remain almost entirely excluded from the processes that build peace.<sup>3</sup>

Canada knows that, given the opportunity, women and girls can play vital roles in establishing and maintaining peace. Women's active participation in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict statebuilding in particular presents unique and pivotal opportunities to create gender transformative solutions—and, ultimately, more inclusive, gender equal and peaceful societies.

Despite achievements by the UN, its Member States and other actors on the WPS agenda, a gap remains between words and action.<sup>4</sup> Closing this gap represents a unique opportunity for Canada to increase the well-being of women and girls in conflict-affected states, contribute to sustainable peacebuilding, and decrease the threats to international security. But it also requires a more ambitious approach than the Government of Canada took under its previous plan.

It requires Canada to identify the barriers to women's participation and seek the opportunities in conflicts, humanitarian settings, peace operations and statebuilding to challenge the status quo—to transform harmful gender relations and empower women:

- Women and girls must be perceived as survivors, standing as leaders and agents of peace for their families and communities, not as victims.
- Grassroots organizations and movements mobilize for peace and push for gender equality. They need our support to drive this change.
- Peace operations create conditions for peace and protect civilians. Their capacity must be strengthened to address the needs of the most vulnerable and more particularly those of women and girls.

Canada has renewed its Action Plan to achieve these aims.

*“What we really want to do is to hear and bring the messages of women—women in decision making, women who bear the brunt and carry the burden of many of the tragedies that we see—to see how we can come out of this, how we can be a constructive partner in finding the solutions to sustainable development.”*

*Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, 20 July 2017, in Abuja as part of a first-ever UN-African Union trip focused on women, peace and security*

<sup>2</sup> [World Bank Group, Fragility, Conflict and Violence program publication \(2017\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Between 1992 and 2011, women represented only 4% of signatories to peace agreements and 9% of peace negotiators. UN Women Facts and Figures: Peace and Security, citing “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence,” October 2012, p. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> The gaps are well documented in UN Women: [Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 \(2015\)](#).



## WOMEN AS PEACEMAKERS

Canada knows that women, as well as men, are full members of their society and must actively participate in the negotiations, reconciliation and reconstruction within their communities required as a result of conflict.

Women's participation in conflict resolution, as negotiators or mediators for example, makes peace agreements more durable. In fact, when women fully participate in peace processes, agreements are 20% more likely to last at least two years and 35% more likely to last 15 years.<sup>5</sup> Research also shows that women have organized and performed mass action campaigns in favor of peace agreements more than any other group, pressuring parties to start negotiations and sign peace deals.<sup>6</sup>

Because men and women experience conflict and understand peace differently, women bring a different perspective to resolving conflict and building peace. They broaden and deepen the discussion on peace and

security beyond the interests of combatting parties, they increase community buy-in, and they help address the root causes of conflict.

In post-conflict states, up to 40% of households are headed by women,<sup>7</sup> making women highly attuned to their community's reconstruction needs. Evidence shows that "with access to income generation and economic security as a result of just peace agreement outcomes, women tend to be quicker to invest in child welfare and education, to build food security, and to rebuild rural economies, greatly contributing to longer term stability."<sup>8</sup>

We also know there is a connection between women's participation in peace operations and the effectiveness of these missions. In fact, women and men alike are more likely to report sexual and gender-based incidents of violence when they can speak to women officers.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, women are better able to reach out to all members of the population to understand their concerns and the dangers they face. Yet, there are still few women in the UN's Formed Police Units, comprising 7%,<sup>10</sup> and women military personnel in UN missions remain the exception, comprising 3%.<sup>11</sup>

This and other evidence shows that when women are put in key roles in peace operations, peace processes and military deployments, the effectiveness of the missions and processes increases considerably.

<sup>5</sup> Laurel Stone, "Annex II, Quantitative Analysis of Women's participation in Peace Processes in Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes," New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Thania Paffenholz, Nick Ross, Steven Dixon, Anna-Lena Schluchter and Jacqui True, "Making Women Count - Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations," Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) and UN Women, April 2016 p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> "Governance, Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding" ed. by Carl Bruch, Carroll Muffett, Sandra S. Nichols, Routledge, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2015), p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> UN Women: "Progress of the World of Women: In Pursuit of Justice", 2011, p. 59 ff.

<sup>10</sup> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, [Gender Statistics by Mission: for the month of April 2017](#). The majority of police officers serving in United Nations peace operations are deployed as part of a Formed Police Unit.

<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council (2016). Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security, S/2016/822, p. 7.

## BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING PEACE

While recognizing women's potential, Canada cannot ignore the impacts that conflicts and fragility have on women and girls.

Women and girls face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on gender is frequently compounded by discrimination based on other identity factors such as ethnicity, race, religion, age, sexual orientation and ability. This is often exacerbated during conflict when discrimination against particular groups of women and girls can take on a violent form.

For example, sexual and gender-based violence is often used as a tactic of war. In various instances, women human rights defenders are harassed, detained and murdered. Access to justice can be non-existent, or at best more dangerous than usual, making the chances for long-term reconciliation more difficult.

Almost half of the countries with the highest child marriage rates are also the least peaceful countries.<sup>12</sup> In June 2017, Canada co-sponsored a resolution on Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Humanitarian Settings at the UN Human Rights Council. It noted that the incidence and risk of child, early and forced marriage is exacerbated in humanitarian settings due to various factors, including insecurity and the use of forced marriage as a tactic in conflict.<sup>13</sup> Maternal mortality more than doubles in conflict or post-conflict situations.<sup>14</sup> Targeted gender equality efforts in response to conflict remain

weak and fragmented. Violent extremism, prolonged humanitarian and migration crises, and the effects of climate change threaten women's and girls' security and livelihoods even further.

Canada launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy to reduce poverty and build a more peaceful and sustainable world. Canada knows that investing in gender equality and the rights of women and girls is the most effective way to reduce poverty and inequality and to prevent conflict and achieve peace.

## CANADA'S OWN CHALLENGES: LEARNING FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

Although Canada is not a fragile or conflict-affected state, women in Canada face a variety of challenges including gender-based violence. Indigenous women and girls in particular face intersecting discrimination and violence based on gender, race, socioeconomic status and other identity factors, as well as underlying historic causes—in particular the legacy of colonialism and the devastation caused by the residential school system. While Indigenous women make up 4% of Canada's total number of women, 16% of all women murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012 were Indigenous.

The government has committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples in Canada. It wants to right the wrongs of the past and address current issues and concerns. The government has accepted the Calls to Action outlined in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

<sup>12</sup> [Girls not brides](#) citing [UNICEF's State of the World's Children report 2016](#) and the [Global Peace Index 2017](#)

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, Thirty-fifth session, 6-23 June 2017, Resolution on Child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings.

<sup>14</sup> UN Women calculations based on data from Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group estimates and birth estimates of the Population Division's World Population Prospects, cited in the SG report, S/2014/693, p. 27

*“Canada is built on the ancestral land of Indigenous peoples— but regrettably, it’s also a country that came into being without the meaningful participation of those who were there first. . . . For Indigenous peoples in Canada, the experience was mostly one of humiliation, neglect, and abuse. Of a government that . . . sought to . . . eradicate their distinct languages and cultures, and to impose colonial traditions and ways of life. . . . And for many Indigenous peoples, this lack of respect for their rights persists to this day.”*

*Prime Minister [Trudeau’s address to the 72th Session of the United Nations General Assembly](#)*

and confirmed its intention to adopt without qualification the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A review of Canadian laws and policies is underway to ensure that the government recognizes and respects Indigenous rights. To address the disproportionately high rate of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and to meet Indigenous organizations’ and others’ call for action, the government established the independent National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Efforts to improve the child and family welfare system and housing conditions for Indigenous peoples in Canada are other examples that reflect the government’s intention to achieve true reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Nevertheless, much work remains to be done before Indigenous peoples in Canada have adequate housing, quality education and safe drinking water, before they no longer face discrimination, and before Indigenous women and girls no longer have to fear for their physical safety.

It is a priority for Canada to address these challenges and to learn from our own experience. Canada will continue to work to advance reconciliation and to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples here at home. Globally, in the context of this Action Plan, Canada’s learning experience with the consequences of colonialism and the continued challenges faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis will help improve Canada’s capacity to respond to challenges faced by women and girls abroad.

Canada launched *It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence*, a whole-of-government approach to prevent and address this form of violence nationally. Budget 2017 included \$100.9 million over five years, and \$20.7 million per year ongoing, to implement *It’s Time*. This will include the Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre within Status of Women Canada. The Centre will better align existing resources across government and support the development and sharing of research and data to enable more coordinated action on gender-based violence.

## THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Decades of effort, largely driven by civil society, have produced a legal framework and a set of international norms—the WPS agenda—that address the situation of women and girls in conflict.

The resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council that form this agenda—starting with Resolution 1325 in 2000—reaffirm the important role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts, in peace operations, in humanitarian response, in post-conflict reconstruction, and in counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism. The resolutions guide the UN and Member States in:

- Empowering women and girls in efforts to prevent, end, and recover from armed conflict; and
- Ensuring respect for women’s and girls’ human rights, including urging the development of measures to prevent and address rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

An important element of the agenda is the international legal framework. It clearly establishes that rape and other forms of sexual violence may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide, as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the jurisprudence developed by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and other ad hoc tribunals.

The WPS agenda is also informed by the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child



and its additional protocol on children in armed conflict, the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, and other international human rights and humanitarian law instruments, as well as by the UN Security Council’s complementary efforts for the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Canada has been among the strongest proponents internationally of the WPS agenda and has a long history of advocating for and supporting gender equality, of promoting the empowerment of women and girls, of calling for the protection of their human rights, and of fighting sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict settings. Canada was instrumental in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 and in bringing the issue of sexual violence against women to the UN’s attention. It was a leader in the drafting of the Rome Statute—that clearly defines rape as a war crime—and in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Canada voted for resolution 1325 when it was a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2000 and has co-sponsored subsequent resolutions of the Security Council on WPS.

In 2000, Canada formed the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security, an informal group of 53 UN member states. This Group, currently chaired by Canada, shares information and best practices, and conducts periodic joint advocacy in the UN context.



Canada keeps the advancement of WPS at the top of the international agenda through its work in international forums such as the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the International Organisation of La Francophonie, the Commonwealth, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the G7 and the Global Coalition against Daesh. Canada will continue to play a leading advocacy role at the UN on advancing the WPS agenda, and engage with key UN agencies and a wide range of Member States.

## THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is a priority for Canada, and the government is committed to taking a leadership role in this global agenda.

Development and security go hand in hand. As the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development reminds us, “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”

The WPS agenda aligns with the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Gender Equality (SDG5) and Peace and Justice (SDG16). The 2030 Agenda recognizes that full human potential and sustainable development cannot be fully achieved if one half of humankind are denied their human rights and opportunities. Building and sustaining peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts requires rapid and flexible interventions, as well as longer-term efforts to address the root causes of instability.

# CANADA'S VISION FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: GENDER EQUALITY AS A FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

*“Women’s rights are human rights. That includes sexual and reproductive rights ... These rights are at the core of our foreign policy. To that end ... Canada’s first Feminist International Assistance Policy... will target women’s rights and gender equality. We will put Canada at the forefront of this global effort.”*

*Minister Freeland’s address to Parliament on Canada’s foreign policy priorities on June 6, 2017*

Canada’s vision for WPS is part of the Government of Canada’s feminist agenda, which prioritizes gender equality and the rights of women and girls at its core. Evidence shows that reducing gaps in gender equality increases a society’s level of peace.<sup>15</sup> Evidence also shows that if given the opportunity, women—in all their diversity—can generate positive outcomes for their families, their communities and their countries. Creating these opportunities means challenging the discrimination women and girls face—recognizing that inequalities exist along intersectional lines—and designing our programs and policies accordingly.

Canada’s feminist agenda recognizes the role of civil society in advancing, promoting and protecting human rights. This is why Canada will support the full participation of local women’s organizations to advance the WPS agenda in areas such as peace negotiations, conflict prevention, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding. This includes support to gender-responsive local and Indigenous processes for conflict resolution. Local women’s organizations know the realities and needs in the field and therefore play a key role in advancing human rights while helping to build communities.

Canada’s feminist approach involves men and boys as partners in transformative change. Men and boys can be powerful actors in preventing gender-based violence and the marginalization of women and girls, as well as in creating opportunities for them. Canada’s feminist approach challenges the normalization of harmful gender relations. It is based on the understanding that addressing root causes of gender inequality requires the transformation of power relations associated with discrimination, coercion and violence in Canada and abroad.

The Government of Canada has already moved decisively in this direction. Canada’s Feminist Foreign Policy, including its International Assistance Policy, puts women and girls—gender equality, empowerment and human rights—at the centre of decisions on humanitarian action, development assistance, and peace and security interventions. Indeed, integrating gender into our whole-of-government security

<sup>15</sup> Valerie M. Hudson et al., *Sex and World Peace*, 2012.

The Government of Canada's feminist commitment is evident in many recent announcements, including: \$650-million commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights; \$150 million in funding for local women's organizations; and the publication of the Chief of the Defence Staff's directive on UNSCR 1325 that calls for the implementation of the resolution across the Canadian Armed Forces, including in planning and deployment activities.

engagements is critical: from early warning tools; to natural disaster responses; to defence and security capacity building; to peace operations; and to post-conflict stabilization.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy has committed to significantly increasing programming that will advance gender equality and empower women and girls. At least 95% of all Global Affairs Canada's bilateral international development investments will specifically target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2021-22 (15% targeted and a further 80% integrated). A significant portion of that funding will go to fragile and conflict-affected states.

With the intention to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach, Canada also works to include gender-based initiatives in its trade and climate change negotiations.

Canada's new Defence Policy—Strong, Secure, Engaged—with its focus on gender equality and diversity, is also part of this feminist approach. The government's efforts to recruit more women into the Canadian

Armed Forces, and to address sexual misconduct in its ranks, as outlined in the Defence Policy, are telling examples of the interconnectedness between the WPS agenda and what we do at home. These measures will allow Canada to deploy more effectively and allow us to lead by example.

In addition to Global Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence, the RCMP is a core partner for the implementation of the Action Plan. The RCMP is committed to placing the WPS agenda at the centre of its international efforts, such as in the areas of deployments, capacity building and recruitment.

The 2017-2022 Action Plan embeds the feminist approach into the way Canada works on peace and security. This approach is based on the conviction that all people share the same fundamental human rights and that all people should be given the same opportunities to build and develop their communities while working toward sustainable peace.

Women accounted for 24% of Canadian police deployed to peace operations in 2015-2016, exceeding the UN goal of 20%. Meanwhile, women accounted for 13.5% of the Canadian Armed Forces personnel deployed to UN and NATO operations. The Chief of the Defence Staff set a target of increasing the number of women in the Canadian military from 15% to 25%, which will make more women available for deployment to international peace operations.

# THE NEW ACTION PLAN: CLEAR, COMMITTED, STRONG

Clear objectives, committed partners and strong targets are the essential ingredients to driving transformative change over the next five years.

The 2017-2022 Action Plan goes beyond its predecessor: it is a high-level guiding policy that is comprehensive, detailed and collaborative. It uses a Theory of Change that illustrates how specific actions contribute to each objective. The Theory of Change will evolve as contexts change. To ensure Canada's flexibility and responsiveness to realities and needs in the field, the implementation plans of each partner department will be updated whenever required.

Canada's ambition lies in maintaining a high commitment to the full breadth of the WPS agenda and in bringing domestic and international tools to bear on the achievement of five objectives.

## OBJECTIVES FOR THE ACTION PLAN

Guided by UN Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent UN resolutions on WPS, the Government of Canada Action Plan partners will implement the following high-level objectives:

- Increase the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and networks in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict statebuilding.

- Prevent, respond to and end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated in conflict and sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and other international personnel, including humanitarian and development staff.
- Promote and protect women's and girls' human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.
- Meet the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings, including the upholding of their sexual rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Strengthen the capacity of peace operations to advance the WPS agenda, including by deploying more women and fully embedding the WPS agenda into CAF operations and police deployments.

*"The continued operational excellence of our military also requires that it reflect Canada in all its diversity, that it be inclusive, and that it provide at all times and in all ranks a respectful environment for women."*

*Minister Sajjan*



## ACTION PLAN PARTNERS

Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police play a central role on Canada's behalf in conflict-affected states. These departments will continue their work as the **lead partners** on the 2017-2022 Action Plan and will build on their work under the previous Action Plan in strengthening their collaboration in the field.

Four **supporting partners** are joining the 2017-2022 Action Plan: Public Safety Canada, Status of Women Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Department of Justice.

Supporting partners mainly focus on domestic policy and programs, but they also work on issues of global importance—such as migration, justice sector reform, combatting violent extremism and resettlement of refugees from conflict-affected states.

Therefore, they will contribute to the empowerment, inclusion and protection of women and girls around the world.

When Canada engages in a conflict-affected state or region, partners will work together—more than ever before—to ensure their individual efforts are not just complementary, but fully leveraged to add up to more than the sum of their parts.

## TAKING ACTION

Lead partners have made commitments in the following three areas:

- Political leadership and diplomacy;
- Programming; and
- Capacity to deliver results.

The Theory of Change illustrates how the various commitments by the lead and supporting partner departments contribute to the Action Plan's five objectives. Separate implementation plans define specific activities and will serve as public yardsticks against which all stakeholders can measure how Canada is advancing the WPS agenda. The implementation plans will be regularly reviewed and, whenever possible, augmented during the period the 2017-2022 Action Plan is in effect.

### Political leadership and diplomacy

Canada is committed to integrating gender into all of its policy and diplomatic engagements. Political leadership and diplomacy are necessary to operationalize and enforce the normative and legal WPS frameworks. Strong leadership and diplomacy are also crucial in advancing the agenda and ensuring it reflects emerging issues.

Canada strives to lead and strengthen the rules-based international order from which Canadians benefit. As such, Canada will exercise its diplomacy and political leadership, using all avenues and forums at its disposal, including at the UN, NATO, OSCE, Commonwealth and La Francophonie, to put the role of women and girls in conflict-affected states at the centre of any discussions or decisions about those situations and to strengthen international norms. In addition to multilateral diplomacy, Canada's mission network will play a critical role in both implementing and informing Canada's Action Plan.

For example, Canada will advocate for:

- The meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and networks in peace processes, as well as more women in international peace operations and national security sectors.

- Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and other international personnel, including humanitarian and development staff.
- More women to assume leadership roles in the UN and across the international peace and security architecture.

Canada will also help ensure that the WPS agenda evolves globally to respond to the changing nature of conflicts.

### Programming

The UN has called on Member States to commit to the implementation of the WPS agenda. This is why Canada will increase its programming to advance the WPS agenda by supporting projects in fragile and conflict-affected states that target the rights, participation, empowerment and protection of women and girls, including support to local women's organizations in those states. Canada will also ensure gender analysis informs all projects through explicit and deliberate steps and results that ensure that the interventions provide equitable access and benefits, promote women's equal participation in decision making, and consider the rights and particular interests of women and girls, as well as those of men and boys.

Canada's \$150-million annually Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOPs) will increase its commitment to gender-equality programming through dedicated WPS projects. Of all PSOPs investments, 95% will explicitly target or integrate WPS activities by 2021-22 (15% targeted and a further 80% integrated). This will complement efforts that will be made across all Global Affairs Canada grant and contribution programs in accordance with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy.

*“As part of its new feminist agenda, Canada will be investing in grassroots women’s organizations to ensure that more women are involved in peacebuilding. It is crucial for countries and regions that are seeking peace to be inclusive. The resolution of conflicts cannot be achieved by leaving women on the sidelines. Canada will do its part by calling for more women leaders and women’s organizations to be at the centre of any peace-building efforts.”*

Minister Bibeau

Programming to advance the WPS agenda will, for example:

- Help women to better understand their legal rights and improve their access to justice. Canada will also help increase the capacity of governments—notably their police and judicial systems—to strengthen laws and services and hold perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes to account.
- Ensure that emergency humanitarian funding includes support for women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health needs, and raise the importance of this targeted assistance with international partners and at international events in the humanitarian system.

- Help increase the representation of women in national security sectors in fragile and conflict-affected states and in international peace operations.

### Capacity to deliver results

Partners of the Action Plan will increase their capacity to deliver results by building expertise and dedicating more efforts to showing leadership.

All policies and programming will use Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+), an analytical tool used throughout the Government of Canada to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives—WPS efforts included. GBA+ reminds all decision makers that policies must be assessed through a feminist lens, based on all identity factors, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation and ability.

Operation HONOUR is the name of the Canadian Armed Forces mission to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour from the Canadian military. This mission is based on the following principles:

- Every woman and man who serves their country deserves to be treated with dignity and respect—anything less is simply unacceptable; and
- Any attitude or behaviour that undermines the camaraderie, cohesion and confidence of serving members threatens the long-term operational success of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Canada will also for example:

- Strengthen gender and WPS training, including on gender-based violence, for government personnel.
- Recruit more women to the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Increase the number of women deployed in multilateral peace operations and other stabilization efforts.

Supporting women's participation in Canada's own institutions is key to delivering on the WPS agenda, both because this enables more women to deploy internationally, and because we should lead by example.

In the Canadian Armed Forces, as outlined in the Department of National Defence Policy, women will be supported by the promotion of a culture of leadership, respect and honour. The CAF will strive to eliminate harmful behaviour and ensure a work environment free from harassment and discrimination. It will do this by fully implementing the 10 recommendations of the Deschamps report through Operation HONOUR. To ensure that CAF members are best able to execute their duties in peace operations, they are provided pre-deployment training on human rights, protection of civilians, WPS, conflict-related sexual violence, child protection, sexual exploitation and abuse, and human trafficking.

The RCMP will strengthen its pre-deployment courses for Canadian law enforcement officers participating in peacekeeping operations—just one of the ways in which it will further advance the WPS agenda. These types of law enforcement contributions are essential to advancing the principles of WPS and to enacting the change at home and abroad that will ultimately lead to gender-equal societies.

*“The thousands of women across Canada who dedicate themselves to keeping our country safe inspire us all with their leadership, skill and strength. Every day they push the boundaries, and lead the way in achieving excellence. It's only by accepting and celebrating the contributions of all people that we can achieve our greatest success. When women have the opportunity to share their talents and expertise without a 'glass ceiling' everyone benefits.”*

*Minister Goodale*

## ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for Canada's implementation of the international WPS agenda and for ensuring that implementation across government is aligned with the government's foreign policy priorities. Global Affairs Canada, through PSOPs, coordinates the whole-of-government Action Plan efforts.

Ministers of Action Plan partners are accountable for delivering on their respective implementation plans. All partners commit to integrating the Action Plan into corporate planning and reporting regimes and to tracking and reporting progress through their contributions to the annual progress reports.

The implementation of the Action Plan will be coordinated in several ways, as described below.

### PSOPs Advisory Board

The PSOPs Advisory Board, a whole-of-government forum at the Director General level, brings together departments and agencies involved in Canada's peace operations and coordinates government policy on the Action Plan and Canada's role in implementing the WPS agenda.

### WPS champions

Each lead Action Plan partner has identified a WPS champion. These individuals will act as key resources on the agenda in their respective departments. The champions are responsible for delivering on the implementation of their commitments and for ensuring the approach is coherent. WPS champions

will meet with the Action Plan Advisory Group, as a minimum, in connection with the preparation or tabling of progress reports. WPS champions are:

- Global Affairs Canada: The Director General of PSOPs, who is also Canada's National Focal Point globally for WPS implementation.
- Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: A General Officer, who is designated by the Deputy Minister of National Defence and the Chief of the Defence Staff and who will also be the GBA+ Champion.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: The Assistant Commissioner of Federal Policing, Intelligence and International Policing.



## Action Plan Advisory Group

The Action Plan Advisory Group will advise PSOPs—as coordinator of the Action Plan—as well as the PSOPs Advisory Board on the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Group will comprise civil society experts and government officials and will be co-chaired by a PSOPs official and a representative of civil society through the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C). The Group will meet regularly throughout the Action Plan's life cycle to exchange experiences and best practices, discuss challenges and develop innovative solutions related to the implementation of the Action Plan. The Group will also engage with staff from Canadian embassies abroad and women's groups' leaders to learn from experiences from the field.

The Group will improve progress monitoring by means of a continuous dialogue between civil society experts and government officials who are responsible for implementing the Action Plan. WPS Champions will attend meetings as defined in the Group's terms of reference.

The terms of reference will be developed jointly by the government and the WPSN-C. The Group will be established within the first six months of the launch of this Action Plan.

Together, the PSOPs Advisory Board and the Action Plan Advisory Group will ensure the Action Plan implementation is strategic, coordinated, and responsive to new challenges. Monitoring will also involve continuous consultation with local women's organizations that are beneficiaries of Canadian programming and advocacy.

## Progress Reports

Canada will continue its practice of annual, public progress reporting and will table reports every September. This— together with an independent mid-term review and summative evaluation—will enhance the dialogue with civil society and parliamentarians on Canada's role in implementing the WPS agenda.

Implementing the Action Plan is part of the government's broader commitment to results and delivery, through which each department reports on key priorities in their yearly reports. The Prime Minister also holds stocktaking exercises with government ministers on his priorities; the Action Plan is part of the Prime Minister's commitment to gender equality and diversity.

Canada's approach to international assistance is based on evidence that advancing gender equality is both the right and the smart thing to do: Giving everyone the same opportunities in life helps reduce poverty and increase economic growth and increases stability world-wide, including for Canadians.

Moreover, progress reporting will allow Action Plan partners to update their implementation plans based on the annual review:

- Where targets are not being met, barriers will be identified and addressed.
- Where targets have been met, new and more ambitious targets can be set.

- Where contexts have changed, so too will Canada's political, diplomatic and programming strategies.

## INDISPENSABLE COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Recognizing the crucial role of civil society, Canada will support local women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights. To amplify women's voices around the world, Canada will also collaborate with Canadian civil society and women's organizations at the grassroots level to find new and innovative ways to work together. Canada's Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance – A Feminist Approach will guide these efforts.

The Government of Canada has consulted with civil society in developing this Action Plan, in particular with WPSN-C. On-going engagement with these dedicated experts, as well as consultations specifically on the Action Plan renewal, have been invaluable in moving the government's policies forward.

Recognizing the crucial role of civil society, Canada announced \$150 million in funding for local women's organizations that will facilitate programming in a range of sectors, including reconciliation and conflict prevention. This new funding is essential to enable transformative change on the ground and to amplify women's voices around the world.

The government will strengthen and formalize this collaboration through the establishment of the Action Plan Advisory Group, described above, whose members will monitor progress and discuss emerging issues.

## CONCLUSION

The 2017-2022 Action Plan is a comprehensive plan to support women's full participation in peace and security efforts, to prevent, address and fight impunity for conflict-related sexual violence, and to consolidate women's and girls' empowerment and advance gender equality, including in the world's most dangerous and complex conflicts.

An expanded government partnership, enhanced capacity and robust collaboration with civil society will enable Canada to make a greater impact in achieving these objectives.

The empowerment of women and girls in efforts to prevent, end and recover from armed conflict benefits us all. Gender

equality and inclusive peace processes build more stable societies—a precondition for a peaceful world for everyone: women, men, girls and boys.

The rights of women and girls cannot be compromised. Canada will lead.

*"Turning aside from our responsibilities is not an option."*

*Minister Freeland's address to Parliament on Canada's foreign policy priorities on June 6, 2017*

## DEFINITIONS

### **Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM):**

The term “child marriage” refers to a marriage in which at least one of the parties is a child. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. “Early marriage” is often used interchangeably with “child marriage” and refers to marriages involving a person aged below 18 in countries where the age of majority is attained earlier or upon marriage. Early marriage can also refer to marriages where both spouses are 18 or older but other factors make them unready to consent to marriage, such as their level of physical, emotional, sexual and psychosocial development, or a lack of information regarding the person’s life options. A forced marriage is any marriage that occurs without the full and free consent of one or both of the parties and/or where one or both of the parties is/are unable to end or leave the marriage, including as a result of duress or intense social or family pressure.

(Source: the April 2014 report on Preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

**Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)** refers to the process of disarming soldiers or other fighters, disbanding their military units, and helping them integrate socially and economically into society by finding them civilian livelihoods.

**Fragility** is characterized as the accumulation and combination of risks combined with insufficient capacity by the state, system, and/or communities to manage, absorb, or mitigate its consequences. This situation of exposure to risk can lead to negative outcomes, including violence, armed conflict, protracted political crises, and chronic underdevelopment. Risks and coping capacity are measured in five dimensions to

include political, societal, security, economic, and environmental aspects. (Source: the OECD)

**Gender** refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society may construct or consider appropriate for men and women. It can result in stereotyping and limited expectations about what women and men can and cannot do (e.g. femininity and masculinity). Gender is different from sex, which refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men, women and intersex persons.

**Gender equality** refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men and gender-diverse people. Equality refers to the state of being equal while equity refers to the state of being just, impartial or fair. However, equality of opportunity by itself does not guarantee equal outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people.

**Gender mainstreaming** means ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities, such as policy, programming and advocacy, and in all phases: planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+)** is an analytical tool used by the Government of Canada to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that the analysis goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, like race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, and mental or physical disability. The Government of Canada committed to using gender-based analysis in 1995, as part of the ratification of the [United Nations’ Beijing Platform for Action](#).

**Gender-responsive** policies or programs are developed with the consideration of gender norms, roles and inequalities with measures taken to actively address them.

**Gender-sensitive** indicates a cognitive awareness of gender differences, but appropriate action may not have been taken. However, the terms gender-responsive and gender-sensitive are often used interchangeably.

**Gender transformative** interventions go beyond gender responsiveness and specifically aim at transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision making, and support for women's and girls' empowerment.

**Justice and security sector reform (JSSR), security sector reform (SSR) or security system reform (SSR)** refers to reforming or rebuilding a state's security sector to establish effective, accountable and representative security institutions that carry out their legitimate functions in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound governance (i.e. good security sector governance). The term "security sector/system" includes the military, police, and other institutions such as border management and correctional services, the judiciary, and legislative oversight bodies. SSR is an important part of post-conflict statebuilding.

**Multiple and intersecting discrimination:** Individuals have layered identities based on intersecting identity factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, religion, age, sexual orientation and ability. The discrimination they face is multidimensional and its various components cannot be addressed separately.

**Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence perpetrated against someone based on their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender. Specifically, GBV includes any act of violence or abuse that can result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering. It affects every society and every social class and occurs in both private and public life. Whether the context is the use of rape as a tool of war, sex trafficking, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation, or other forms, GBV is a violation of human rights in all cases. It is a disempowering force that erodes a person's self-dignity, health and ability to participate in social, economic and political life. GBV is a barrier to gender equality, sustainable development and peace. GBV is rooted in gender inequalities and is intensified by other forms of discrimination, including racism, colonialism, disability, homophobia, transphobia and poverty. It is often exacerbated in conflict settings.

Sexual violence is a prevalent type of GBV. Sexual violence in conflict includes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization or abortion. The international legal framework clearly establishes that rape and other forms of sexual violence may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Many states have laws that punish these acts, either as the specified crimes or as ordinary crimes under national law. The International Criminal Court in the Hague will in some instances have jurisdiction. Some international treaties and, arguably, customary international law, oblige states to either prosecute or extradite persons who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The international regime and many states agree that amnesty cannot be granted for these serious violations of international law.

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**Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)** include: age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education; reproductive health services; family planning services, including contraception; safe and legal abortion services and post-abortion care; prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections; prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including the prevention of harmful practices such as child and early forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting and the provision of psycho-social services for SGBV survivors; training of health care professionals in the provision of sexual and reproductive health care services and family planning; advocacy activities of women's, youth, Indigenous and LGBTI civil society groups; addressing social norms that limit women's and adolescents' control over their bodies and reproductive decision making; and removal of judicial and legal barriers to the fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**Transitional justice** consists of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented in order to redress legacies of human rights abuses. Measures include criminal prosecutions, truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations programs and various kinds of institutional reforms.

**Women's and girls' empowerment** is about women and girls taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills and developing self-reliance. Policies and programs can support these processes. Women and girls can be empowered, for instance, by establishing conditions in which women can decide about the use of resources and income (economic empowerment); have access to good quality education (social empowerment), and can participate in political life (political empowerment).

*These definitions are formulated and compiled to help readers understand the terms as they are used in the Action Plan.*