



Global Affairs Canada: Feminist Foreign Policy Dialogue

Thank you for your contribution to the feminist foreign policy dialogue. We invite you to provide your contribution below, within the five (5)-page limit

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Please indicate if you are submitting this contribution:

- As an individual
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Please indicate the areas covered in your contribution:

- Overarching considerations
 - Enhanced diplomatic engagement
 - Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
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Written Contribution:

Reinforcing the need for Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy: EM2030 data shows both challenges and opportunities for progress on global gender equality

Equal Measures 2030 commends the Government of Canada for joining the (still relatively) small set of countries committed to implementing Feminist Foreign Policies.

Canada's vocal support for a feminist agenda has driven global attention, resourcing, and action for gender equality. We also applaud Canada's commitment to international cooperation even whilst the COVID-19 crisis is creating significant challenges at home. As Minister Gould has recognised, "COVID-19 is a threat that does not recognize borders and will only be overcome through coordinated action...Our government will continue to be a progressive voice..."

The more countries that pursue truly feminist foreign policies, the better for global justice, prosperity, and stability. Canada's actions and leadership will encourage more countries to join the rising tide towards greater gender equality.

EM2030's own data and research show that the movement for a feminist foreign policy is more important than ever: there are great challenges to promote gender equality around the world, but there are also signs that rapid change on gender equality is possible. With an ambitious feminist foreign policy, Canada can help support and promote the potential for rapid change.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the movement for gender equality was at a critical juncture. 2020 marks 25 years since 189 countries committed to the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights (The Beijing Platform for Action) and also marks the 10 year countdown to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects for people across the world. But the world will not realize this ambition if we don't ensure that girls and women have equal rights and opportunities.

With less than a decade to go before the 2030 SDG deadline and with [COVID-19 causing drastic set-backs in progress on gender equality](#), the world is far from realising this promise. The number of women living on less than \$1.90 a day is now [projected to increase by 11% between 2019 and 2020](#). **[EM2030's SDG Gender Index shows that not a single country has achieved gender equality](#)**.

EM2030's 2020 [Bending the Curve report](#) showed that rapid change on gender equality is possible: if all countries matched the pace of fast-moving countries, many of the gender-related SDG targets could be reached by 2030, changing the lives of hundreds of millions of girls and women. We studied five vital gender equality targets for which data were available: access to contraception, girls' education, women's political leadership, workplace equality laws, and safety. **On each of these five issues, there were countries who made fast progress over the past ten or twenty years, sometimes astonishingly fast.**

Considering these challenges and opportunities, EM2030 fully supports the six principles of a feminist foreign policy that have been proposed by the Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group.

EM2030 Key Facts about Global Gender Equality

- No country has fully achieved the promise of gender equality envisioned in the SDGs (*2019 SDG Gender Index*)
- Nearly half of the world's girls and women live in countries that got a "failing grade" on gender equality in the *2019 SDG Gender Index*
- Globally, progress on gender equality (measured by five key issues related to access to contraception, girls' education, women's political leadership, laws on equality in the workplace and safety) has been slow or even flat over the past 10 to 20 years (*EM2030 Bending the Curve, 2020*)
- 2.1 billion girls and women live in countries that won't achieve any of the gender equality targets we studied by 2030 if their current pace of change continues (*EM2030 Bending the Curve, 2020*)

Recommendations for action

The dialogue process launched by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to feed into a White Paper on Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy provides an opportunity for the government to set out both how it defines this policy and provide guidance to diplomats and policy makers.

EM2030 has four recommendations for how the feminist foreign policy could be strengthened and deepened in the next phase of implementation.

1. Address gender data gaps with an intersectional lens (both at home and through international assistance investments)

- Data gaps impede the measurement and trend analysis of many indicators of gender equality. EM2030 continually comes up against these data gaps in trying to track progress on global gender equality.
 - Data gaps prevent us from understanding even the “average” picture for girls and women within a country, however the gaps are particularly stark when it comes to trying to understand the situation for girls and women who face additional and intersecting discrimination and disadvantage because of their race or ethnicity, wealth or income, geographic location, sexual orientation, disability, and many other factors.
- The lack of sufficient gender data is linked to gender discrimination and a lack of prioritisation of issues that affect girls and women in many data systems.
- Some issues have far better data differentiated by gender (as well as age, diversity and other key characteristics) than others – education and health indicators lead the way in terms of clarity, comparability, and country coverage.
 - In addition, close to **80 per cent of countries worldwide** regularly produce sex-disaggregated statistics on mortality, labour force participation, and workforce training.
 - Yet **less than a third of countries** disaggregate official statistics by gender on other measures that are critical to gender equality, including informal employment, ownership of businesses, violence against women, and unpaid work.
- Gender advocates responding to a 2018 EM2030 survey stated severe data gaps weaken advocacy on issues impacting the lives of girls and women.
 - Almost 85 per cent of advocates reported official data on gender equality to be ‘somewhat’ or ‘mostly’ incomplete, despite recognizing the vital role of data for deciding provisions by governments.
 - Around 91 per cent of them believed that collecting data on gender issues was ‘not a priority’ for governments.
- EM2030's national partners express concerns regarding the accuracy, validity, and representativeness of existing government-generated data, especially as it marginalizes women and girls - especially those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination - in myriad ways.
- Data gaps are even more of a challenge when we go below the national-level data into state, county or community-level data where data systems are weaker. Yet significant policy and budget decision-making takes place at sub-national levels, especially in countries with Federated or decentralized systems.
 - Most of EM2030's partners (including la Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, Colombia; SAHAJ, India; KAPAL Perempuan, Indonesia; and GROOTS, Kenya) have emphasised the importance of sub-national, district-level, or department-level data to effectively influencing policymakers: subnational data gaps limit the ability of organizations to provide location-specific data analysis in their advocacy to government officials
- The challenges of gender data gaps do not just affect Canada's International Assistance partners; they are just as **prevalent at home**, particularly when it comes to understanding the situation of

racialised, indigenous, and other groups of women facing intersecting discrimination and barriers in Canada.

- Addressing gaps in gender data at home, alongside an international strategy to support these principles abroad, must be a central tenet of Canada's feminist foreign policy

2. Invest in capacity development for feminist movements and organisations to use and leverage the power of data

- Feminist organizations and movements understand the challenges and barriers that different groups of girls and women face. They can give data context, embed it in a narrative to construct a story, make a case and move policymakers to take action. When feminist organizations and movements apply that community-level knowledge and experience to engage with official statistics systems, highlight data gaps, and combine qualitative research and storytelling with quantitative data, we know that their advocacy drives change.
- Our experience and insights reveal that many gender equality advocates, especially feminist organizations and movements, face resource and capacity gaps restricting them from effectively using data and evidence to elevate their advocacy.
- The early years of EM2030's work has shed light on a spectrum of learning needs in this sphere: building trust in data and systems, data literacy, developing a better understanding of what data exists and where to find it, finding and advocating on data gaps, identifying startling facts to support a campaign, and communicating data to different audiences, to name a few.
- When asked what would help them to use data and evidence more effectively to promote gender equality, 70 per cent of the advocates we surveyed in 2018 agree that they need greater knowledge of existing data and where to find them, indicating that advocates have challenges in using existing data, as well as challenges presented by ongoing data gaps
- **Canada has the opportunity to support its focus on funding feminist movements and organisations with complementary investments in data-driven advocacy capacity to further strengthen the collective impact of feminist campaigning and organising**

Box 5: The impact of data-driven advocacy training for feminist organizations and movements

"The training is crucial as it has led to a fundamental shift in the way that we carry out our advocacy.

Previously, our advocacy was mainly driven by qualitative evidence, which is important. However, this training has enabled us to use quantitative evidence to complement the stories we share and reinforced our messaging.

Learning to combine qualitative and quantitative evidence in our advocacy has been impactful. It has enabled us to shine a spotlight on women's issues in the communities where we work, to convince candidates and civil servants to pay attention."

Participant in Data-Driven Advocacy workshop led by la Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres in Bolívar, Colombia in May 2019

3. Invest in data tools that promote accountability and help monitor the health of feminist movements

- Crucial to the success of Canada's feminist foreign policy will be the ability to track, measure and hold key actors accountable for the changes needed to implement the policy in practice
- Monitoring the results of the feminist foreign policy will be made harder by the gender data gaps highlighted above – is Canada's feminist foreign policy driving demonstrable change for the world's women and girls? We often lack the data we need to answer this question

- **Canada should invest in new measurement and monitoring tools that will help it to track the macro-level impacts of its feminist foreign policy**
- One such tool could be a new regular, global survey of feminist organisations and movements around the world, a concept that EM2030 has been developing in collaboration with other feminist organisations; this would be the first ever attempt to regularly and systematically gather the views and expertise of WROs globally.
 - The concept centres around a desire to help fill gaps in timely data and evidence regarding both perceptions of progress on gender equality as well as the diversity and health of feminist movements seeking change.
 - By working with a stable sample of feminist organisations globally, we could gather valuable insights that can help shape advocacy at national, regional, and global levels.
 - Crucially, the survey aims to provide data and evidence that can support feminist organisations themselves in their advocacy, and there is an extensive validation and learning process planned after each survey to discuss, interrogate, and socialise results.
- Such a monitoring and accountability tool would provide Canada with another source of data to monitor the overall impact of its feminist foreign policy

4. **Expand the scope of policies to review for coherence with the Feminist Foreign Policy, including international tax policy**

- The movement towards more feminist foreign policies has brought important focus to the range of domestic and international policies that affect the promotion of feminist values internationally. For example, international trade policy is a core tenet of a feminist foreign policy and indeed Canada has included gender equality provisions in several recently negotiated free trade agreements
- As Canada moves forward with deepening its feminist foreign policy, it should broaden the scope of policies considered for “coherence” with feminist values
- International tax policy, for example, has a major impact on the extent to which countries have sufficient resources and “fiscal space” to invest in the public services and social programmes that benefit the whole of society, but that disproportionately benefit girls and women (for example, because of their reproductive roles and additional care burden).
 - [Tax Justice Network recently revealed](#) that countries are losing a total of over \$427 billion in tax each year to international corporate tax abuse and private tax evasion, costing countries altogether the equivalent of nearly 34 million nurses’ annual salaries every year – or one nurse’s annual salary every second
- And yet, international tax policy is rarely considered “in scope” for feminist foreign policies
- As part of its feminist foreign policy, Canada should support international measures that will support increased tax revenue, especially in low- and middle-income countries. These [measures include](#) working with other countries to build support for excess profit and wealth taxes and backing the need for a UN Tax Convention.

5. **Include a focus on the “how” and the promotion of feminist funding practices**

- Canada’s Feminist Foreign Policy White Paper should address not just the “what” in terms of feminist priorities, but should also guide how Canada disburses and manages funding and partnerships
- Recent research released by AWID and Mama Cash (in the context of their Count Me In! partnership), noted that, in recent years, several governments have adopted feminist foreign policies and committed to increase their support for ‘women and girls’ but that more than [99% of these resources never reached feminist movements directly](#).
 - The research identified four categories of “building blocks” that should be considered for increased and improved resourcing of feminist movements, which include fostering

political commitment to funding feminist movements, reviewing eligibility criteria (for example, funding floors and re-granting policies), adapting programme design and funding mechanisms (for example, increasing flexibility, supporting core and organisational costs, considering pooled funding, etc.), and considering diverse approaches to managing and governing funds

- Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy should incorporate lessons from this work, which clearly outlines a range of enabling practices that funders can replicate, scale up, or adapt to overcome some of the challenges that prevent bilateral and multilateral assistance from truly reaching and resourcing feminist movements

6. Champion a G#FFP (Group of Feminist Foreign Policy Countries)

- There is a small but growing number of countries that are pursuing Feminist Foreign Policies, and yet the most powerful networks of countries (such as the G20 and the G7/G8) are not explicitly built upon feminist values (though countries like Canada have promoted a focus on gender equality through these groups, with tangible impact on women and girls like that of the *G7 Charlevoix Declaration on quality education for girls, adolescent girls and women in developing countries*)
- Canada could champion a new grouping of countries for those pursuing Feminist Foreign Policies
- This could create a global platform for learning, debate and collaboration around the promotion of feminist policies and feminist cooperation
- Unlike the G7 or G20, the G#FFP would be encouraged to grow, with countries of all income levels able to join when they demonstrated tangible commitment to the pursuit of Feminist Foreign Policy programs

About Equal Measures 2030

Equal Measures 2030 is a partnership formed by global, regional and national organisations from civil society and the development and private sectors who work together to connect data and evidence with advocacy and action on gender equality.

As EM2030, we share a belief in the power of girls and women, and their collective action towards equality. We also share a belief in the power of data. Good data can help expose injustice, ignite change and drive accountability for gender equality. But it can only do so when it is actively used by advocates – especially feminist organizations and movements – supported by champions from government, business, media, academia, faith-based groups, and beyond. We work alongside advocates and gender equality champions from all sectors to tell the story of progress (or lack thereof) for girls and women at the local, national, regional and global level, set against the SDGs.

Our Council partners include the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Comité de América Latina y El Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres (CLADEM), Data2X, the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), KPMG International, ONE Campaign, Plan International, Tableau Foundation, and Women Deliver.