

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LA FRANCOPHONIE



The Prime Minister gave me the mandate to refocus Canada's international assistance on helping the poorest and most vulnerable people and supporting fragile states.

After a year of consultations involving more than 15,000 people

in 65 countries, I am proud to present Canada's new **Feminist International Assistance Policy**.

The primary objective of this policy is to contribute to global efforts to **eradicate poverty** around the world. To achieve this, we must address inequality. Specifically, we need to make sure that women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential so they can earn their own livelihoods, which will benefit families as well as the economic growth of their communities and countries.

This policy responds to the recommendations made by stakeholders and reflects Canadian values. It defines an approach based on human rights, one that takes into account all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, place of birth, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or migrant or refugee status.

The policy is evidence-based and takes into account Canada's expertise and comparative advantage. It supports the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030, and it is also aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.

I want to highlight three issues that particularly captured my attention during the consultations. First, I heard that our policy must underscore the importance of **human dignity** at a time when conflicts are multiplying and humanitarian principles,

international laws and human rights are increasingly under threat. Second, if we want to maximize the impact of our actions and help eradicate poverty, we must passionately defend the **rights of women and girls** so they can participate fully in society. And lastly, for our actions to be sustainable, we must ensure that they contribute to **building local capacity**.

Canada's vision for international assistance, therefore, is as follows:

**"Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal."**

As a result of this new policy we will focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a manner that is both **targeted and crosscutting**. A targeted approach to gender equality allows us to focus on initiatives that fight poverty and inequality by supporting gender equality and defending the rights of women and girls, particularly their sexual health and reproductive rights. Going forward, these initiatives will receive special, focused attention. A crosscutting approach to gender equality means that all of our international assistance initiatives, across all action areas, should be developed and implemented in ways that improve gender equality and empower women and girls. This approach also means that all our implementing partners must consult with women and involve them in needs assessments, decision making and planning of initiatives, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Canada has adopted a feminist approach because we firmly believe that women and girls have the ability to achieve real change in terms of sustainable development and peace, even though they are often