

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the minister of international development, I am pleased to present the 2017-2018 Report to Parliament on the Government of Canada's Official Development Assistance.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy was launched in June 2017 and has helped position Canada as a global leader in promoting sustainable development through a gender-equality lens. It seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Based on overwhelming evidence, Canada recognizes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieve this goal. The policy and its goals demonstrate Canada's strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which jointly aim to eradicate poverty by 2030.

Under the Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada is implementing a targeted and crosscutting approach to gender equality. This 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 and reproductive health and rights. In 2017-2018, I was proud to announce several new investments to this end, including \$150 million to support local women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights in developing countries, and \$100 million to support small and medium-sized organizations to deliver international assistance results aligned with the Feminist International Assistance Policy and implement innovative programming in partnership with local organizations. This is in addition to the \$650 million over three years in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights that was announced by the Prime Minister in March 2017.

I was also pleased to launch Canada's Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance – A feminist approach, which will enhance cooperation with civil society partners, reinforce their capacity in key areas, and promote stronger international assistance results with greater impact.

The government took important steps to enhance the implementation of the new Feminist International Assistance Policy and commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through Budget 2018, including the announcement of an additional \$2 billion to international assistance over five years, starting in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Budget 2018 made key investments to support innovation in Canada's international assistance. It allocated \$1.5 billion over five years, starting in 2018-2019 for two new programs: the International Assistance Innovation Program and the Sovereign Loans Program. These new programs will expand Canada's development toolkit and enhance our ability to leverage Canada's international assistance to help unlock additional funds in support of sustainable development. In February 2018, Canada launched its Development Finance Institute Canada, branded as FinDev Canada, to continue to increase and diversify its range of mechanisms for working with the private sector to support international development priorities.

The Budget also included a commitment to enhance transparency of Canadian international assistance programming. This includes reforming and more clearly communicating the funding structure of Canada's international assistance, such as the creation of separate dedicated pools of funding for humanitarian assistance and core development assistance. It means enhancing Canada's international assistance reporting and better communicating with Canadians and other stakeholders. We will continue to work at implementing this commitment over the coming year.

I am also proud of the contributions Canadians and civil society partners made to humanitarian action through the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund, initiated by the Government of Canada. In 2017-2018, Canada provided \$38 million to support the hundreds of thousands of people in Bangladesh and Myanmar affected by the violence in Myanmar. This support includes \$12.5 million that matches the generous contributions made by Canadians to registered charities under the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund initiative. I commend