

# AREAS OF ACTION

## GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS



While Canada has long championed women's rights and empowerment issues, 2016-2017 saw intensified efforts to make this a central focus of its international assistance.

Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy makes gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls the core driver for all of Canada's development assistance efforts. The new policy also establishes this as a stand-alone action area. It focuses on specific multi-sectoral issues required to build the foundation for gender equality and achieve progress across all other areas.

Canada's leadership on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls also extends to its multilateral engagement. For example, in 2016-2017, Canada led two resolutions aimed at ending child, early and forced marriage. One resolution was put forward in partnership with Benin at the 16th Summit of La Francophonie in November 2016. The second resolution was initiated with co-lead Zambia at the UN General Assembly in December 2016.

Minister of International Development and La Francophonie Marie-Claude Bibeau supported Canada's efforts at the General Assembly, hosting an event in September 2016. This event brought together civil society organizations, human rights organizations and activist groups all representing women, men, boys and girls. They discussed the important role they all play in the collective realization of the 2030 Agenda—in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

Canada's support of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were also central themes of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's first visit to Africa in November 2016. The Prime Minister highlighted Canada's efforts to protect women's rights, and combat sexual and gender-based violence and child, early and forced marriage. Canada's investments in appropriate sanitation facilities in schools to support girls' increased attendance in high school were also profiled.

This section provides examples of results achieved in 2016-2017 within the following sub-themes of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls:

- eliminating sexual and gender-based violence;
- supporting women's rights organizations;
- enabling public sector capacity building for gender equality; and
- strengthening the evidence base for gender equality.