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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

The following document contains a summary of Cooperation Canada's contribution as well as Développement international Desjardins' additional comments and recommendations.

Self Identification:

Name(s): _____

Pronoun: _____

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Please indicate if you are submitting this contribution:

- ☐ As an individual
- ☒ On behalf of an organization
- ☐ On behalf of a group of organizations or individuals

Please indicate the areas covered in your contribution:

- ☒ Overarching considerations
- ☒ Enhanced diplomatic engagement
- ☐ Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
- ☒ Responding to evolving vulnerabilities
- ☐ Inclusive digital transformation
- ☐ Other: please specify

Introduction

Cooperation Canada commends the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Global Affairs Canada for launching the consultation process that will inform Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy. Canada's feminist international assistance policy (FIAP) has been praised as a strategic and ambitious policy framework whose success depends on the overall coherence of Canada's foreign policy, linking the pillars of international affairs and diplomacy, international assistance, trade, and peace and security. Ensuring a coherent approach for Canada's efforts on the global stage not only reflects commitments in the FIAP but is also necessary to address key global issues of socio-political and economic inequality, climate change, conflicts, global health affecting communities everywhere and realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Articulating a feminist foreign policy is a complex task, mired in challenges of defining contentious concepts such as "feminism" as well as Canada's envisioned leadership in bilateral and multilateral contexts. Articulations of Canada's global leadership, which the future feminist foreign policy should consider are outlined in [the outcome document](#) from the [2019 Summit on Canada's Global Leadership](#). Moreover, Canada should build on lessons offered by countries that already boast explicitly feminist foreign policies as well as recommendations heralded by academics and civil society representatives engaged in this area of work.

Cooperation Canada represents over 90 organizations working in international cooperation, including humanitarian, development, and peace and security contexts. Our submission focuses on (i) the overarching principles of the feminist foreign policy, (ii) opportunities to maximize the impact of Canada's international engagements, and (iii) strategies to operationalize the feminist foreign policy.

Recommendation 1: Canada's feminist foreign policy should outline a non-prescriptive approach guided by human rights and efforts towards global solidarity

Recommendation 2: Canada's feminist foreign policy should explicitly define how the Government of Canada understands feminism in the context of foreign policy

Recommendation 3: Canada's feminist leadership should focus on constructive collaboration and effective partnership

Recommendation 4: Canada's feminist foreign policy should integrate lessons emerging from FIAP implementation about the engagement of local actors in multilateral and bilateral decision-making processes

Recommendation 5: Canada should use its global position to support the ongoing shift towards more inclusive and context-adapted rules-based international order

Recommendation 6: Canada's feminist foreign policy must include concrete steps to ensure policy coherence across trade, defense, peace efforts, diplomacy and international assistance

Recommendation 7: Canada's approach to policy coherence must include a feminist approach to ensuring coherence between development, peace and humanitarian efforts.

Recommendation 8: Canada's feminist foreign policy should support localization efforts as part of Canada's approach to the triple nexus and fulfilling international commitments.

Recommendation 9: Measure progress against Canada's feminist foreign policy through quantitative and qualitative metrics, informed by experts and partners

Recommendation 10: Develop accountability systems for feminist change and leadership

**Développement international Desjardins (DID)'s
comments and additional recommendations**

Facilitate the private sector engagement in the FIAP implementation

The Feminist International Assistance Policy commits Canada to “engage in private sector partnerships that attract co-financing and investment, help identify new solutions (and) increase and diversify the range of mechanisms for working with the private sector.”

GAC is developing a department-wide strategy to enhance its collaboration with the private sector and build new global partnerships with governments, civil society, and other actors to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy will enhance GAC's capacity to deliver international assistance outcomes by:

- More effectively applying private sector knowledge, expertise, intelligence, and innovation to international assistance policy and programming activities;
- Strengthening and expanding partnerships that mobilize additional private capital to contribute to sustainable development.

The FIAP framework seeks to increase investment for gender equality by mobilizing additional private sector capital to address development challenges and bring solutions to scale.

DID emphasizes the need for more financial resources and expertise to finance new models and solutions that will help overcome development challenges as well as promote outcome-based programming such as impact and sustainable bonds. In order to do so, Canada's international development framework/model must be modified to: (i) better support and include the application of private sector expertise and market-based solutions and other capabilities to address development challenges; and (ii) incentivize the private sector to deploy innovations and technologies that support sustainable business practices and contribute to the FIAP policy.

Embed concretely innovation principles into gender equality programs

DID also notes that GAC's policies on innovative finance and innovation, including among others the IAIP program, directly link to the FIAP policy and framework. These linkages should be made clear in the strategy, including how GAC ensures policy coherence within the provision of international assistance.

As part of Canada's FIAP, Canada pledged to promote "innovation, research and results" "by encouraging greater experimentation and scaling up new solutions to develop challenges ". More specifically: creating partnerships to fill resource gaps; Facilitating experimentation and data collection to create evidence-based and solid databases; Determining the pathways for the

transition from successful pilot projects to scale-up; Scaling up tested solutions that challenge gender inequality and remove barriers to empowering women and girls.

It is also important to adapt and consider the realities and specificities of the private sector. The notion of agility should therefore be recalled as a key principle. The agile approach advocates adaptive planning, scalable development, early delivery and continuous improvement. It therefore encourages a rapid and flexible response to changes.

Put more emphasis on risk mitigation for private investors

The International Assistance Innovation Program (IAIP) is impact driven and focuses on creating sustainable development impact through its investments. It foresees an increase in the volume of investment in development through the mobilization of private sector actors using tools such as blended finance. The IAIP will apply a gender lens across all its activities to ensure gender and social analysis contribute to and improve investment decisions and calculations of risk.

Blended finance unlocks additional investments by having the public sector/donors/philanthropists absorb some real and/or perceived risks to improve other investors' risk-adjusted returns.

DID recommends that Canada's international development framework/model put more emphasis on mitigating both real and perceived risks for investors by using its patient, flexible, and risk-tolerant capital. This is a key condition to attract additional private funding, and build markets in the long-term, by using its catalytic capital to create profitable investment opportunities with acceptable risk-return profiles for private investors.