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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

Self Identification:

Name(s): Djenana Jalovic, EdD, MPA, MSc

Pronoun: she/her

Organisation: Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and World Physiotherapy

Email: djenana@gmail.com

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

Written Contribution:

* Please respect the **five (5)-page limit**

From a feminist policy to disability inclusive feminist practice

A quick reality-check

1. The preparation of this contribution started with a quick search in the Project Browser for the word “disability” resulting in 19 projects that had the word “disability” in their description since 2006. I had a pleasure of directing two out of 19 projects. Seven of the projects were awarded in the last three years, after the Feminist International Assistance Policy had been introduced.

Aspirations

2. In its Feminist International Assistance Policy Canada 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.

Statistics

3. World Health Organization and the World Bank in the 2010 World Disability Report revealed that
 - a. 15% of global population experience some form of disability, 80% of whom live in low- and middle-income countries
 - b. There are more females than males who are disabled over the course of their lifetimes due to factors such as poorer working conditions, poorer access to quality health care, violence, and childbirth
 - c. The disability prevalence among people 45 years and older in low-income countries is higher than in high-income countries, and higher among women than among men
 - d. People with disabilities face barriers when accessing health care, they are two times likely to find health care providers’ skills and facilities inadequate, three times more likely to be denied health care and four times more likely to be treated badly in the healthcare system
 - e. 50% of people with disabilities cannot afford health care
 - f. Only 10% of all children with disabilities are in school and of this number only half who begin, complete their primary education
 - g. Women with disabilities of all ages have difficulty with physical access to health services (e.g. sexual and reproductive services, cancer screening, etc.)
 - h. Women with disabilities are less likely to have and use assistive devices compared with men with disabilities

- i. Girls with disabilities are less likely than either boys with disabilities or girls without disabilities to obtain health care, get an education, receive vocational training, find employment or benefit from full inclusion in the social, political or economic lives of their families
- j. Women with disabilities have lower employment rates (19.6%) compared with both men with disabilities (52.8%), and women without disabilities (29.9%), and they commonly earn less than men with disabilities and women without disabilities
- k. Girls and young women with disabilities are at increased risk of forced marriage, forced sterilisations and forced abortions, and are more likely to experience emotional, physical, and sexual violence with increased risk to HIV both within and beyond the household.
- l. These statistics demonstrate a failure of organizations, systems, and countries to meet the needs and protect the rights of people with disabilities.
- m. As for the girls and women with disabilities there is no indicator that shows that they fare better than any other group in the world, despite the fact that various international and national legal instruments protect their rights and numerous projects focus on women. This implies that needs and rights of persons with disabilities in general and girls and women with disabilities, are not fulfilled at any level. Like policies, programs and projects targeting the needs of the general population left behind women, women focused initiatives often leave behind girls and women with disabilities.

Legal framework

- 4. Canada as a Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), has a legal obligation under the Convention to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 2015 by the United Nations, represents a unique opportunity to implement and monitor the UNCRPD.

Commitment

- 5. Canada is committed to providing feminist international assistance that is **human rights-based and inclusive**.

Can Canada do better?

- 6. Yes, Canada can and must do better.
- 7. If persons with disabilities continue to be left behind, it will be impossible to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world.
- 8. Canada has an opportunity to become a leader in disability inclusive development as no country is currently championing rights of persons with disabilities. The Government of Canada has an opportunity to work with its partners, relevant international and regional organizations and civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities to

promote inclusive and accessible international cooperation, particularly inclusive and accessible international development initiatives.

Way forward: Building on Feminist International Assistance Policy

9. By ensuring that all international assistance projects funded by the Government of Canada promote and protect human rights of persons with disabilities and that the projects are inclusive of persons with disabilities, specifically women and girls with disabilities, Canada can become a role model not for the implementation and monitoring of sustainable disability-inclusive development. This requires that the Government and implementing agencies funded by the Government:
 - a. intentionally include persons with disabilities, specifically women and girls with disabilities, as beneficiaries and implementing partners, promoting their fair and just treatment in the society.
 - b. actively seek collaborations with a range of organizations of persons with disabilities as partners in development to ensure diversity and fair representation of all persons with disabilities including women with disabilities, indigenous, racialized, and LGBTQ2S+ people with disabilities.
 - c. commit to remove environmental, attitudinal, communication, structural, policy and procedural barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in and benefiting from the Government of Canada international assistance on an equal basis with others.
 - d. ensure accessibility and concrete reasonable accommodations enabling participation of persons with disabilities in its global initiatives.
 - e. share lessons learned about mainstreaming disability and inclusion of persons with disabilities among implementing agencies, partners and the public.
 - f. ensure that indicators in performance monitoring frameworks and data collected is disaggregated by disability.
 - g. ensure that adequate budgets are assigned to inclusion of persons with disabilities in its international assistance.