



Women in Canada Call For A National Gender Equality Plan After Millions March for Equality

(Ottawa: February 1, 2017) On the heels of a global mobilization for women's rights, dozens of women's, human rights and labour organizations are calling on the Government of Canada to develop and implement a **National Gender Equality Plan**.

A **National Gender Equality Plan** is one of the key recommendations made by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) after its recent review of Canada's compliance with the UN treaty on women's rights. The November 2016 CEDAW recommendations are far-reaching and clear. Acting on them will require co-ordination across all levels of government.

Women and supporters are calling today for full implementation of the CEDAW recommendations and for leadership from the Government of Canada.

Angela Cameron, Chair of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) says: "Canadian governments have stalled for too long on women's rights, despite extensive and repeated international criticism. It's 2017 and now is the time for a full response, one that is thoughtful, coordinated, intersectional in its approach, and able to effect real change."

Francyne Joe, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, said: "Indigenous women and girls are disadvantaged in every area: employment, health, education, safety, housing, food, clean water, political participation, and simple recognition of our worth as human beings. The CEDAW Committee has told Canada to design strategic interventions to address the desperate social and economic conditions of Indigenous women and girls. We are looking forward to real action and real change."

Bonnie Brayton, Executive Director of the Disabled Women's Action Network (DAWN) said: "Give Canadian women something to really celebrate for Canada's 150th birthday! Women with disabilities need to see governments take co-ordinated, concrete and forward-looking steps to ensure equity for all women."

Farhat Rehman of the Council of Muslim Women said "A justice system that works equally for all women is a fundamental right. But Muslim women need Canadian governments to act on CEDAW recommendations and combat the negative cultural stereotypes that we face. They are a hindrance to our access to justice against violence and discrimination of every kind."

Leilani Farha, Executive Director of Canada Without Poverty, said, "The United Nations CEDAW Committee was clear: Canada does not adequately provide the programs and services essential to women's equality. Women need: income equality, equal pay,

decent jobs, affordable childcare and housing, adequate legal aid, access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, sufficient protection from violence, and a justice system that responds to their needs in all parts of the country. Women in Canada do not have that yet.”

Barb Byers of the Canadian Labour Congress said, “Women can't wait any longer for real progress. There are steps that the Government of Canada can take right now to get a National Gender Equality Plan rolling - restoration of funding to the community-controlled Court Challenges Program, rolling out the promised national child care system, and fixing federal pay equity laws.”

“On January 21st,” said Byers, “thousands of women across this country marched for equality. The Prime Minister sent out a note of congratulations saying that the marches ‘keep our government inspired.’ We say to the Prime Minister and our government: now is the time for action. Let’s begin today the hard work of improving Canada’s record: make equality for *all* women a reality.”

Getting a National Gender Equality Plan in place is the focus of a new campaign, *Step Up for Women’s Equality!* This campaign will provide information and co-ordination for civil society work on implementation of the CEDAW recommendations <http://fafia-afai.org/en/step-up>

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