

August 4, 2017

Standing Committee on Finance (finapbc-cpb@parl.gc.ca)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 090

Dear Finance Committee Members,

I am pleased to submit the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) recommendations for consideration during the preparation of the 2018 federal budget, which will prioritize spending and establish policy priorities for the 42nd parliament.

CFUW monitors with interest the federal investment in women's equality and inclusion through proactive strategies for health, education, economic empowerment and elimination of violence against women.

We believe the issues outlined in the reference document need full attention and funding now to counter balance years of deficit funding and inattention. Below are the areas for immediate attention and funding to halt loss of productivity and stop the erosion of inherent human rights:

- Uphold Canada's commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- Invest in health, education economic empowerment and elimination of violence against Indigenous peoples
- Develop and execute a National Poverty Strategy
- Eliminate the Gender Gap
- Implement Universal Pharmacare in collaboration with the Provinces

Founded in 1919, CFUW is a non-partisan, equality-seeking, self-funded organization of more than 8,000 women in 100+ Clubs across Canada. Because we are geographically diverse and represent members with diverse backgrounds and interests, our brief covers several areas rather than concentrating on one issue.

CFUW is affiliated with Graduate Women International, headquartered in Geneva with about 55 affiliates world wide. Both organizations have special consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and attend the meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Thank you for considering our concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Grace Hollett
National President, Canadian Federation of University Women

Executive Summary

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) recommends the Government of Canada adopt fiscal strategies to address the complex and intersecting issues affecting the social and economic equality of all Canadians, including Indigenous peoples.

Areas that require immediate attention and funding to halt loss of productivity and stop the erosion of inherent human rights include upholding Canada's commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, using a Canadian lens.

We also ask the government to **close the Gender Gap** by funding programs that remove barriers to full participation in the labour force, including a **Universal National Childcare Policy**, and a **Poverty Reduction Strategy** that delivers ambitious and achievable targets.

Additionally, CFUW recommends the government **promote gender parity** in the workplace by investing in programs that close the gender gap in areas where women are underrepresented, and **introduce pay equity legislation** that encompasses both public and private sectors.

And finally, we recommend that the government work with the provinces and territories to introduce **Universal Pharmacare**.

First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit

CFUW acknowledges that by including these recommendations, we are not speaking on behalf of Canada's Indigenous peoples. We agree with the recent recommendations of the BC Council for International Cooperation in their analysis of Canada's position regarding progress on Sustainable Development Goals, particularly that the Federal Government ensure the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples as nations, recognizing their unique histories within Canada and implementing full legal rights based on localized systems.¹

Improving the social and economic well-being of Canada's Indigenous population is not only a moral imperative, it is a sound investment.² Canada's Indigenous population is its fastest growing demographic group, and has much to contribute to Canada's economic wellbeing.

CFUW supports Canada's financial investment in issues most important to First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit communities, which may include but are not be limited to:

- **Child welfare:** Implement the three decisions issued by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to address disparity in child welfare funding to Indigenous children on reserves.³
- **Education:** Improve educational outcomes for First Nations children, preferably in their home communities, while maintaining First Nations control over the education system. Currently, federal government funding of education on a per-student basis is lower for Indigenous children than for their non-Indigenous peers.
- **Reconciliation:** Work toward meaningful reconciliation between the federal government and Indigenous Peoples.
- Address the issue of **Violence Against Indigenous Women**, including creating effective strategies to prevent trafficking of vulnerable and at-risk women in indigenous communities.

National Poverty Reduction Strategy

Of the 4.9 million Canadians across the country living in poverty, almost one third are children. Poverty affects Canadians differently. One quarter of a million Canadians experience homelessness annually and one in eight households struggle to put food on the table. Single-parent families, individuals aged 45-64 living alone, people with work-limiting disabilities, recent immigrants and Indigenous people, are more likely to live in poverty than others.⁴

CFUW recommends the government develop and fund a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that sets and delivers on ambitious and achievable targets to reduce poverty, and measures and publicly reports Canada's progress. Because Canada lacks both an and official definition of poverty and an official measure to track it, CFUW recommends the government create a definition of poverty based on a rights-based approach, leading to the creation of a holistic set of indicators that look beyond narrow, individualistic economic measures.

Invest in Women's Equality – Eliminate the Gender Gap

Access to health care, digital inclusion, and legal protection contribute to Canada's position as a global leader in women's equality.⁵ Yet, due to investment deficits in female-dominated sectors of the economy and a lack of government policies that support women's participation in the workforce, gender inequality persists.

Advancing women's equality has the potential to increase Canada's annual GDP by 0.6% or by \$150 billion in incremental GDP in 2026. Closing the gender gap completely with equal workforce representation by women could add \$420 billion to the Canadian economy by 2026.⁶

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

CFUW urges the Government of Canada to uphold its commitment to the SDGs, particularly #5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*⁷ (UNwomen) by:

- Developing a national strategy, in consultation with all stakeholders, including marginalized individuals, to implement the SDGs, built on respect for human rights, diversity, the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment.⁸
- Using nationally-appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess SDGs in a Canadian context.⁹
- Addressing ongoing marginalization and inequalities faced by indigenous peoples, women, and other groups in Canadian society, including immigrants and refugees.¹⁰

Non-traditional Jobs / STEM

Although women hold 53% of university degrees in Canada, they represent a minority of corporate leaders.¹¹ Women's participation in the labour force has declined over the last decade, and barring a shift in trends, will continue to do so.¹² At the current rate, the gender gap in the labour force, high-quality STEM occupations, management and among business owners, will take 30 – 180 years to close.¹³

Technology-oriented and knowledge-intensive enterprises are engines of Canadian development and economic growth. The shortage of skilled and educated workers in Canada's tech sector, combined with an overall decline in enrollment in computer engineering, computer science and software engineering are clear obstacles to business development and job-creating expansion.¹⁴ Currently, only 21% of all computer sciences graduates are women, and women comprise less than 25% of the work force in technology related fields.¹⁵

In addition, the move toward gender parity in the workplace is paralleled by substantial gains in revenue and productivity. Every 1% increase in gender diversity results in a 3.5% and 0.7% increase in revenue and workplace productivity respectively.¹⁶

CFUW recommends the government invest in programs to increase the participation of women, particularly for vulnerable populations, in fields where they are currently under-represented.

Pay Equity

In Canada, men earn on average 18.97% more than women – 3.51% above the OECD average.¹⁷ CFUW commends the government on its commitment to bring forth proactive pay equity legislation, ensuring women in the public service, Crown corporations and other federally regulated sectors are paid equally for work of equal value, but this legislation needs to be rolled out more broadly.

Violence against Women

Violence against Women and girls continues to be a barrier to gender equality, standing in the way of human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁸ Domestic violence has a significant impact on work performance and productivity, and often results in job loss.¹⁹ Its cost to Canadian employers alone is \$78 million dollars annually, not including costs to workers, their families and society at large.²⁰

Because female victims of domestic violence are less likely to obtain and maintain quality permanent work and more apt to change jobs frequently, and earn less money, they lack the resources and security to leave their abusers, reinforcing the cycle of abuse.²¹

CFUW commends the government on the federal strategy on gender-based violence focusing on prevention, including engaging men and boys, data collection, and supports for survivors. We agree that better data is key to understanding who is affected by gender-based violence, and how they are impacted.

But CFUW would prefer to see a national strategy which would include provincial and territorial governments and “ensure that women in all areas of the country have access to comparable levels of services and protection.”

Human Trafficking

In Canada, women and children, particularly females between the ages of 14 and 22, are at greatest risk of being trafficked. While we look forward to the final evaluation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, CFUW encourages the government to continue to develop and strengthen existing child protection laws in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We recommend the continued support and development of human trafficking information and awareness campaigns, and an RCMP Youth Strategy, to explore various outreach initiatives among young people. Human trafficking is a tragedy for all affected and a significant loss of potential that those victims could have made to our society

Early Learning & Child Care

Because women take on the majority of unpaid childcare work, they are disproportionately impacted by the lack of a federal child care program.²²

Increasing federal funding to help provinces fund child care providers to allow a 40% fee decrease would positively affect all families, especially low-income families. If the estimated 150,000 stay-at-home mothers with high educational attainment and living with a spouse or a partner, entered the labor force and paid taxes, the GDP would increase by 2%, raising federal income tax revenues by about Can\$8 billion.²³

The 2017 federal budget includes \$3.4 billion over five years for social infrastructure, including early learning and child care, however it is not clear whether the money will be used to build child care facilities or directly fund child care services.

The current National Early Learning and Childcare Framework is not sufficient to deliver affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care. CFUW recommends the implementation of a universal national childcare policy that provides a universal, fully inclusive and equitable system, delivering on the government’s 2015 campaign promise.

Universal Pharmacare

A lack of access to prescription medication leads to time away from work, which in turn affects productivity.

CFUW commends the government for mandating improved access to prescription medications and reducing governments’ costs for these drugs by joining with the provinces and territories to buy them in

bulk, making them more affordable for Canadians. However, Canada is the only country with a universal health care system without Pharmacare. Canada's universal healthcare system is largely restricted to care delivered in hospitals or by physicians; there is limited coverage when the patient needs to fill a prescription.

Over time, a universal prescription drug program would be self-funding. By consolidating spending under a single-payer program, a universal Pharmacare plan could result in savings of up to \$11 billion per year.²⁴

CFUW recommends that the federal government work collaboratively with the provincial and territorial governments to implement a publicly funded Universal Pharmacare plan, to cover medically necessary prescription drugs for all Canadians.

¹ <http://bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HLPF-Report-Online-Version-v3-24072017.pdf>

² <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2010-03.pdf>

³ <https://fncaringociety.com/sites/default/files/Info%20sheet%20Oct%2031.pdf>

⁴ <http://bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HLPF-Report-Online-Version-v3-24072017.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

⁶ <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

⁷ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-5-gender-equality>

⁸ http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/what_we_do/jan2016_transforming_our_world-ccic-final.pdf

⁹ <http://bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HLPF-Report-Online-Version-v3-24072017.pdf>

¹⁰ http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/what_we_do/jan2016_transforming_our_world-ccic-final.pdf

¹¹ <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&id=2820004>

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&id=2820004>

¹² <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

¹³ <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

¹⁴ http://www.itac.ca/uploads/pdf/Women_and_ICT.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.itac.ca/uploads/pdf/Women_and_ICT.pdf

¹⁶ https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/documents/DiversitySpecial%20Report%20WEB_0.pdf

¹⁷ <http://bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HLPF-Report-Online-Version-v3-24072017.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/svawc-vcsfc/index-en.html>

¹⁹ http://canadianlabour.ca/sites/default/files/media/dvwork_survey_report_2014_enr.pdf

²⁰ http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/ci-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf

²¹ http://canadianlabour.ca/sites/default/files/media/dvwork_survey_report_2014_enr.pdf

²² <http://bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/HLPF-Report-Online-Version-v3-24072017.pdf>

²³ <https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwiZvc2o-73VAhVI4oMKHQm3A70QFgg0MAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.imf.org%2F~%2Fmedia%2FFiles%2FPublications%2FWP%2F2017%2Fwp17166.ashx&usq=AFQjCNG7cUxXyozOr2CpJlPaFuGD4VGw>

²⁴ https://nursesunions.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Pharmacare_FINAL.pdf