



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01781**

BY: **Ms. VANDENBELD (OTTAWA WEST-NEPEAN)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 2, 2017**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE MARIE-CLAUDE BIBEAU**

Response by the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

International development and aid

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Canada recognizes that education is not only the right of every girl and boy, but can lead to positive economic and social outcomes for girls and their families, communities, and countries. As part of Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy, launched on June 9, 2017, Canada has committed to supporting equal educational opportunities for all. Specifically, Canada has committed to helping ensure that women and girls get the skills training and education they need to succeed; that school facilities are welcoming spaces that respond to the specific needs of girls; and that those who have missed out on a quality education are provided with life skills and technical and vocational education and training, with an emphasis on assisting women and marginalized youth find work.

Canada's implementation of this policy will build on Canada's expertise and engagement in girls' education. In 2015/2016, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) provided approximately \$336 million in international assistance for education, which primarily aimed to improve access to quality education from the early years to the end of secondary, particularly for girls. As with our entire development portfolio, Canada integrates gender equality into all of this programming.

For example, since February 2016, Canada has supported Jordan's Ministry of Education and UNICEF in providing more than 125,000 Syrian students, over half of them girls, with formal education in host communities and camps. Canada also helped to establish a gender unit at Jordan's Ministry of Education, which developed a network of 56 "gender

champions” to ensure that school development plans are informed by a gender equality analysis and school management structures are more gender-balanced.

Canada also supports targeted programming to address specific barriers girls face in accessing quality education, including child, early and forced marriage; a lack of water, sanitation and menstrual hygiene services; and gender-based violence. For example, Canada has provided \$7.5 million (2014-2017) to UNICEF to support the WinS for Girls program in order to reduce barriers to menstrual hygiene management in schools, so that girls can learn in safe, stigma-free environments. Canada is also providing \$2 million to UNICEF (2016-2019) to support efforts to combat school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in sub-Saharan Africa by building the capacity of teachers’ unions to stop SRGBV.

Additionally, Canada supports the development and delivery of technical and vocational training programs and life skills education to provide women and youth in developing countries with the skills they need to succeed. For example, in partnership with Colleges and Institutes Canada, Canada is providing \$18 million for the “Skills Training for Employment in Mozambique” project (2014-2020), which aims to increase the proportion of female learners in demand-driven, competency-based training programs in the Mozambican energy sectors.

Canada’s new Feminist International Assistance Policy also recognizes that while Official Development Assistance (ODA) is important, it alone cannot achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The Policy commits Canada to work closely with other donors, including in developing countries, and support selected new funding mechanisms to encourage more innovative and cost-effective private- and voluntary-sector solutions to sustainable development challenges. It also commits Canada to improving the effectiveness of our ODA through efforts such as championing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in key multilateral groups. For example, in addition to providing \$20 million over two years to the Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies (2016-2018), Canada’s Minister of International Development and La Francophonie sits on the fund’s High-Level Steering Group. Through this role, Canada has been working to advance the fund’s efforts to reduce barriers to girls’ education in crisis situations, including sexual and gender-based violence in and around schools and the lack of safe water, sanitation, and menstrual hygiene management in schools.