

Brief submitted by: Bev McKibbin, Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)

The following is, in part, a set of principles developed and endorsed by [over 400 organizations](#) from across all sectors of civil society. As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 health crisis and prepare to rebuild, organizations across Canada want representatives to know that we cannot go back to the way things were.

For years we have witnessed the results of chronic underinvestment and inaction in the face of the ongoing, pre-existing crises of colonialism, human rights abuses, social inequity, ecological degradation, and climate change. Now, the COVID-19 crisis is helping us to come to terms with the inadequacies and inequities of our systems. I send these to you today with the hope that any legislation or policy drafted will take the points below, and the spirit in which they are written into consideration.

- 1. Put peoples' health and wellbeing first, no exceptions**

Health is a human right and is interdependent with the health and wellbeing of ecological systems. Recognizing this, ensure that all policies and programs address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health and are responsive to the climate emergency, which is, in itself, a health crisis. Ensure services are public, culturally safe, linguistically appropriate, and accessible to all without discrimination based on status, location, or circumstance – including Indigenous peoples living on and off reserve, people in remote communities, migrants, and undocumented people.

- 2. Address Climate Change and work for a Just Recovery**

Globally, the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by climate change and have the least resources to mitigate or adapt to them. Sub-saharan Africa is one of the places where the impacts of the climate crisis are being felt most profoundly. We need to ensure that the most vulnerable receive our help to ensure a just recovery.

- 3. Build resilience to prevent future crises**

We cannot recover from the current crisis by entrenching systems that will cause the next crisis. We must invest in sustainable infrastructure and build resiliency

within communities, ensuring that people can access public essential services, meet their basic needs, and engage in cultural and artistic expression. It is important to protect ecosystems and biodiversity to prevent future zoonotic infections that may become the next pandemic

4. **Build solidarity and equity across communities, generations, and borders**

In a globalized world, what happens to one of us matters to all of us. A Just Recovery must be guided by the principles of equity, solidarity, and sustainability across domestic and international relations. Recovery plans must honour and expand human rights, including the rights of Indigenous peoples, and advance gender equity while opposing authoritarian regimes and oppressive systems. It must also address the issue of climate variability and extreme weather events which will increase existing inequalities and vulnerabilities between men and women. In this globalized world, we are all only as safe as the most vulnerable people here at home and around the world.

We need to focus on a just and green recovery:

A just and green recovery will include a focus on equality for women, people of colour, indigenous people. The lessons we learn during the pandemic, including the importance of international cooperation on global issues, the need to strengthen health systems and to address systemic inequalities, may create space for people and governments to think about a just recovery and a sustainable future – one that includes climate justice.

A just recovery includes care for the environment, care for all peoples regardless of race or colour, care for future generations, care for our wildlife and it includes a focus on the most vulnerable peoples in the world.