

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming
Federal Budget**

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
La Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités (FCFDU)**

October 7th, 2022

Recommendation 1: That the federal government implement a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and allocate an additional \$500 million per year toward this plan.

Recommendation 2: That the federal government, in the pursuit of environmental justice, end the export of Canadian waste to other countries and increase the momentum and funding of retraining fossil fuel-based industry workers to work in the growing renewable energy sector to at least \$100 million annually for 20 years.

Recommendation 3: That the federal government extend the *Canada Health Act* to include universal, accessible, regulated, and respectful long-term care (LTC) and establish evidence-based national standards that ensure all vulnerable Canadians can live in safety, comfort, and dignity in LTC, or in their homes as long as possible.

Recommendation 4: That the federal government allocate at minimum \$126.5 million for the establishment of a National Council for Reconciliation and to produce a report by the end of 2023 on the progress and barriers to implementing the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the 231 Calls for Justice in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Report.

Recommendation 5: That the Government of Canada's peace efforts fund and enable the active, ongoing, and meaningful role of women at every level of peace-building, and publish their long-awaited Feminist Foreign Policy by 2023.

About CFUW

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a self-funded, non-partisan organization of over 6,500 women across Canada that works to improve the status of women by promoting human rights, public education, social justice and peace in Canada and abroad. CFUW holds [Special Consultative Status with the United Nations ECOSOC](#) and contributes to the UN Commission on the Status of Women annually. Each year, CFUW and its Clubs award approximately \$1 million to women to help them pursue post-secondary studies. Since its founding in 1919, CFUW has worked tirelessly for gender equality for women and girls both domestically and with international partners.

Introduction

2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) – a landmark achievement that reset the global agenda on women’s rights and gender equality. This anniversary was different from others, however, as the spread of COVID-19 quickly evolved into an unprecedented emergency around the world and threatened to unravel decades worth of hard-fought gains for gender equality. Women and girls were uniquely and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and now, more than ever, is a time where we must allocate funds to create more impactful policy responses for those hit hardest by the pandemic. With unique threats against women, such as climate change and gender-based violence continuing past the pandemic, women need more support so that we can collectively succeed through these difficult times.

Violence against Women (VAW) & Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Women and girls have been uniquely and disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in a multitude of ways. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the United Nations (UN) observed significant increases in violence against women and girls across the world.¹ In what is being described as the “shadow pandemic”, these upticks in GBV threaten the safety and lives of women and girls in Canada. However, GBV in Canada predates the COVID-19 pandemic; where Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, and women and girls with disabilities have always been disproportionately affected.

It is estimated that the aftermath of spousal violence alone collectively costs Canadians \$7.4 billion annually in social services, healthcare, judicial services, and lost productivity.² It is of deep concern that funding cuts have been seen in provinces for mandatory training for offenders of Intimate Partner Violence, which have been shown to reduce the rate of reoffending by 50%.³ Increased fiscal and political support for mandatory training is a key tactic for combatting GBV.

¹ [UN Women, 2020](#)

² [Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2022](#)

³ [Beeby, Dean, 2011, Global News](#)

CFUW urges the Federal government to develop, implement and fund a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women & Gender-Based Violence that **focuses on the most vulnerable:** Indigenous and immigrant women, women with disabilities, young women and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. The plan must provide coordination between legislation, policies and programs, including federal action plans: the housing strategy; the poverty reduction strategy; the feminist assistance policy, and; the strategy to address GBV. This plan must integrate comprehensive targets and indicators, timelines and accountability mechanisms. **At least \$500 million annually** in federal funding should be additionally allocated toward this National Action Plan, over and above the budgets for the existing federal action plans.

Climate Change

As our lives continue to change rapidly with the realities of the climate emergencies, so too must the priorities of our government. Fast action for the \$9.1 billion in the 2030 emission reduction plan must target cutting pollution. Passing the Just Transition Act is a significant part of the strategy, where \$100 million annually for 20 years must be contributed towards retraining energy sector workers in the growing renewable energy sector.⁴

By targeting pollution – we are **stopping the problem at the source**. Indigenous and racialized communities consistently experience environmental racism by their proximity to pollution, resulting in negative health and social outcomes. Action to reduce waste, improve the circular economy, regulate the use of toxic chemicals, and eliminate the production and use of single-use plastics is greatly needed. Continued funding for these urgent actions can be found in carbon taxes and cutting subsidies for the fossil fuel sector.

When we discuss environmental justice, much of the discussion must be around transitioning workers from fossil fuel-based sectors to the renewable energy sector. The \$100 million annual program will provide matching services, benefits, facilitate the transition of worker skills, and contribute to employer training. This offers a great investment opportunity for Canada – to create good jobs for Canadians, while making the energy grid cleaner. This is also an opportunity for promoting the inclusion of equity-deserving groups in the skilling of workers in sectors such as solar, wind, and the proliferation of renewable energy infrastructure. Reliable, affordable energy, as well as cutting pollution contributes to a stable economy based on sustainability and equity.

Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed long-standing negligence, inadequate care and a lack of preparation in many Canadian long-term care (LTC) residences. These deficits resulted in high rates of infection and death of LTC residents. In addition, infections of the personal care workers

⁴ [Government of Canada, 2021](#)

forced them into self-isolation and severely compromised facility-staffing levels. More than 80% of all COVID-19 deaths in Canada were in LTC facilities, as of June 2020.⁵

CFUW recommends that the joint federal-provincial/territorial jurisdiction, which is already in place under the [Canada Health Act](#), be **extended** to cover LTC. By placing LTC under the *Canada Health Act*, the Government of Canada can begin to address the immediate and dire needs of elderly and vulnerable persons in Canada through the **creation of universal, accessible, regulated, respectful, and quality LTC**. We would expect that if the *Canada Health Act* is modified to include LTC provisions, it will also include the same compliance requirements as other elements of the Canada Health Act and **funding for compliance monitoring** should be allocated.

Additionally, there is an urgent need to establish and implement common, **evidence-based standards** to ensure all vulnerable Canadians can live in safety, comfort, and dignity. Increased funding for these national standards to be put in place and maintained should also be provided by the Federal government. This funding is crucial for ensuring that all new LTC facilities are equipped to fully implement the [National Standards for Long Term Care Services](#), as outlined per the draft by the Government of Canada in 2022. Ensuring compliance with these standards is crucial to reassure the aging population of Canada that they are not underserved and under resourced but that they are getting the respect and care they deserve.

Indigenous Peoples

CFUW recognizes past and ongoing forms of colonialism experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Indigenous Peoples have lived on this land since time immemorial. CFUW urges the Government of Canada to **publish a progress report** on their work on the [ninety-four actions](#) recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. CFUW advocates that the full implementation of the TRC's ninety-four Calls to Action could substantially improve the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons by addressing institutional, systemic, and multiple intersecting forms of racism and sexism.

The experiences and voices of Indigenous women must be centred in the implementation of Calls to Action #1 to #5 regarding child welfare. Culturally competent health care, as identified in Calls to Action #23 and #24, would help to protect Indigenous women from threats to their health and rights, such as gender-based violence and coerced sterilization. The particular needs and experiences of Indigenous women and their systemic criminalization and overrepresentation in prisons should be addressed as part of Call to Action #30 with particular attention to women's experiences for all Calls to Action relating to the justice system. Transparency and a record of policy gaps will only help to move these issues forward, allowing policy makers and Indigenous communities to adjust as needed, and prioritize their actions.

CFUW is also concerned with the federal government's slow response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) final report and [231](#)

⁵ [Canadian Institute for Health Information \(CIHI\), 2020](#)

calls for justice. It is imperative that the federal government works with Indigenous organizations and communities to discuss and agree to concrete actions that must be taken to address the calls to action. This includes addressing Indigenous women’s immediate needs for housing, income, water and waste water and food security.⁶ In solidarity with Women’s Shelters Canada (WSC)¹³, we call for a *clear plan and timetable* for the implementation of the 231 calls for justice by the federal government.⁷ An initial progress report should be published by the end of 2023: highlighting key **barriers to implementation**, providing a pathway forward for greater safety and justice for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons. This report could be included in the funding and mandate of the earmarked \$126.5 million for the National Council for Reconciliation.

Women and Peace

As Canada’s national action plan on women, peace and security (2017-2022) comes to an end, new commitments must take their place and align with current international needs. UN Women calls for a “renewed global solidarity and feminist multilateralism” in the evolving context of crises like those seen in Ukraine, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.⁸ In these contexts, women need to be recognized as the pillars they are in their communities – they are often leaders of positive change, can increase community buy-in, and excel in negotiation. Yet, women and children are often the most vulnerable in conflicts: they face threats of sexual and physical violence during armed conflict and during efforts to flee. Women’s participation in the peace-building process increases the likelihood of prolonged peace 15 years later by 35%.⁹

Further, a woman’s presence increases the ability to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict zones, increasing the likelihood that women even report these crimes.¹⁰ Unfortunately, we still lack much data on women in peace and security. Therefore, we advocate for more funding, better coordination with ministers, military, interested CSOs, and international partners; as well as better monitoring and evaluation on the effects of women’s participation in peace-building. It is imperative that the new national plan promotes women’s active, ongoing, and meaningful involvement at every level of peace-building, and is published along with the Feminist Foreign Policy by 2023. As Canada sits as co-chair of the Sustainable Development Advocates Group, it has a pivotal role to push the feminist agenda forward, to advocate for a development agenda that **leaves no one behind.**¹¹

⁶ [MMIWG2S+, 2019](#)

⁷ [Canadian Council for Policy Alternatives, 2022](#)

⁸ [UN Women, 2022](#)

⁹ [Government of Canada, 2022](#)

¹⁰ [UN Women, 2021](#)

¹¹ [Canadian Council for Policy Alternatives, 2022](#)