



Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of International Development and La Francophonie
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

18 July 2017

Dear Minister Bibeau,

On behalf of the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D), we welcome Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy.

We are particularly pleased to see Environment and Climate Action as one of the six identified action areas, as we know the devastating impact climate change is having on the world's most vulnerable people, and that concerted action in this area can help to maintain development gains made over the past decades and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a coalition of 26 Canadian international development and environmental organizations, with decades of experience in development and climate change adaptation work around the world, in collaboration with local partners, C4D agrees that "women and girls are disproportionately at risk from the effects of climate change." We know that it is women and girls who are impacted first and worst in the event of extreme weather, such as a powerful hurricane that wipes out their family's crops and livestock, or from a slow-onset disaster that dries up a water source and means they must walk further to collect it.

We are encouraged by the Government of Canada's intent to align the policy with the Paris Agreement and the commitment that Canada's \$2.65 billion in climate finance will "help the most vulnerable countries adapt to and mitigate climate change." This is an issue we follow closely as a coalition. As a delegation from C4D discussed with you in our meeting on December 12, 2016, Canada's climate finance must achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation spending, as donor countries are encouraged to do in the Paris Agreement. In the *Roadmap to US\$100 Billion*, six OECD countries stated that they have or would either achieve the 50:50 balance or prioritize adaptation financing. This includes Australia, Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. We look forward to Canada adding its name to this list. In addition, we must ensure that financing for adaptation work is in the form of grants and not loans. Against this background, it is disappointing to see Canada's heavy reliance on loans, and low percentage of climate finance directed to adaptation work.

Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy states that "communities around the world, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, are experiencing the destabilizing effects of climate change in dramatic and costly ways." We agree. With this in mind, it is imperative that Canada's climate finance be new and additional to our aid budget. Climate change is posing additional burdens on the world's poorest, and new funds are required to meet these challenges. We are concerned by the implications of Canada's \$2.65 billion coming from the existing aid budget and we look forward to hearing that this will be new money and additional to the existing international assistance budget.

The new policy says very little about agriculture and food security, and the role that programs focused on these issues can play in achieving gender equality and climate change adaptation and mitigation for the poorest. We urge the government to focus support on agriculture programs that put top priority on enhancing food security for small-scale farmers. It is important that the focus be not just on women small-scale farmers, but on gender equality as a whole. Engaging and sensitizing men to the contributions of women producers and working to help farm families share labour more equitably both at home and in production will have an indelible impact.

Investing in agro-ecological, agroforestry and conservation agriculture techniques can help to lessen the risk and impact of disasters and unpredictable weather. This work is urgent, as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has warned that up to 122 million more people could be living in extreme poverty by 2030 due to climate change and its impacts on small-scale farmers.

Finally, we notice the absence of reference in the new policy to environmental conservation and restoration, which are key for climate change adaptation and are often missed in development work. Investments in soil, water and biodiversity conservation are essential pieces in any work on climate change adaptation. However, we commend Canada's rejoining of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

We look forward to working with you and the staff of Global Affairs Canada on the three identified priorities under Action Area 4: support for women's leadership and decision-making in climate action; ensuring that the government's climate-related initiatives are addressing challenges faced by women and girls; and supporting opportunities for women in the renewable energy sector. We would welcome the opportunity to contribute our expertise as you develop plans and monitor the achievement of these targets.

The policy states, "We will lead on climate action." C4D welcomes this ambition. As a coalition, we want to help you do this in a way that is truly transformative and that responds to the identified priorities of communities and countries on the frontlines of a changing climate.

Sincerely,



Stephanie McDonald, C4D co-chair
Canadian Foodgrains Bank



Sohel Khan, C4D co-chair
Plan International Canada

With the endorsement of the following organizations:

ADRA Canada

Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF)

CARE Canada

Centre d'étude et de coopération Internationale (CECI)

Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada (CAN-Rac Canada)

Cuso International

Farm Radio International

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Oxfam Canada

Resource Efficient Agricultural Production (REAP) - Canada

The United Church of Canada

USC Canada

World Vision Canada