

## Invest in aid, secure the future:

### Canadian leadership in a deeply insecure world

The world order that we have taken for granted over past decades is shifting fast. And not in small ways. Ongoing reverberations from the pandemic, intertwined with the impacts of the climate crisis, global inflation, rising hostilities and fast-changing geopolitics around the world have created the perfect conditions for authoritarian regimes and populist figures to roll back human rights, especially those of women and girls. It has also led to the intensification of humanitarian emergencies, where needs are enormous and women and girls are bearing the brunt of them. This undermines the basic pillars of democracy, creates devastating humanitarian crises and reverses decades of progress on development.

Many countries are grappling with authoritarian rhetoric and democratic interference, and at the same time determining how to mobilize large-scale financing and structural changes to re-orient their economies to address the development challenges facing their nations and communities.

**The challenges of today pose direct threats to Canada and Canadian interests.**

**Canada can and must do its part. The financing needed to meet these challenges is at a greater scale than was required in the past.**

When Canada has stepped up to deliver its values-based leadership internationally, our efforts have led to demonstrable impacts. We've done this because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's the smart thing to do. Canada has long been praised for its actions as a middle power on the global stage. Since 2015, the government has shown leadership, particularly on supporting Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion, global women and children's health including sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's organizations and feminist movements, climate finance, food security and girls' education.

However, with the rising level of global conflict, Canada's responses have failed to live up to the level that Canadians want and expect. Our restrained responses on the necessary protection of international humanitarian law in Gaza, aggression from the Taliban in Afghanistan, anti-rights legislators in Uganda, and violent street gangs in Haiti have left Canada being seen as "one step behind" by our key partners.

Canada is at risk of being left out of critical global conversations and coalitions, and our ability to advance our interests and values is at stake. This is urgent, and our response must reflect the gravity of the extremely challenging global context.

Canada must immediately make vital, strategic shifts and new investments to protect and advance the extraordinary progress this government has made on **global health, gender equality, education and climate change** – and ensure it can not be rolled back in years to come.

## Now is the time for Canada to double down and champion RIGHTS as the foundation of development as its signature global cause

Historically, Canada has been a reliable voice on the global stage for a rights-oriented, rules-based order. “**Reliable**” is no longer enough. The rules of the game have shifted, and the stakes are higher than ever.

We must step up with meaningful and sustained financial contributions to respond to the enormous humanitarian needs facing the world, and do our part to ensure that peoples’ human rights are protected and basic needs can be met. And we must do so in a way that builds on Canada’s legacy of putting gender equality at the centre of its international assistance.

### So what can Canada do?

- Expand its leadership on **gender equality** through new and additional programming to support the rights of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies and conflicts:
  - Invest an additional **\$100 million/year** for five years to double down on the impacts being driven by the **Charlevoix Education Initiative**.
  - Invest an additional **\$150 million in 2024-25** and **\$275 million/year** for an additional four years to support women and girls in humanitarian emergencies and conflicts, specifically to address gender-based violence, support their nutrition and food security, attain their sexual and reproductive rights and leverage their critical role in brokering peace.
- Invest in **rights and democracy** for a more stable global future by committing to support human rights, civil society and civic space, and to protect democratic institutions, journalists and free and fair elections.
  - Invest an additional **\$150 million in 2024-25** and **\$275 million/year** for an additional four years in programming that supports human rights defenders, civil society and democracy, building on Canada’s leadership supporting women’s rights and feminist movements.

In total, we call on the government to commit **\$400 million per year for 2024-25, and \$650 million per year thereafter** in support of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies and conflicts, human rights, and to double down on Canada’s commitment to the G7 Charlevoix Education Initiative for a total commitment of \$3 billion over five years.

### If Canada doesn’t step up, no one will

The world is looking to Canada to live up to our promise as a progressive leader, standing firm against forces that would roll back human and women’s rights, climate action and democratic progress, and responding to the devastating humanitarian crises faced by millions of people around the world. Canada’s reputation on the world stage may look very different in 10 years as future governments may seek to change course. It’s time to lock in these commitments now.

These investments are essential for positioning Canada in the world we want to see for generations to come, and for advancing our own national interests and values as part of an effective and feminist foreign policy.