

Women are shortchanged, Canada must act, says Oxfam ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Women in Canada and around the world are paid less, have more low-paying jobs and redressing that is fundamental to the global fight against poverty, says Oxfam Canada.

A new report states that the global inequality crisis has reached new extremes as the richest one per cent of the world's people now have more wealth than the rest of the world combined. In Canada, the top one percent owns one-quarter of the wealth. Oxfam says, everywhere women lose out the most.

Situation is 'shocking'

"We found that both in Canada and globally, the situation is pretty shocking," says Dana Stefov, Oxfam Canada's senior women's rights policy specialist and author of the report. Among what she calls surprising statistics, Stefov found that out of 500 occupations in Canada, 469 fetch lower salaries for women than they do for men. The pay gap is more significant for visible minority, indigenous and immigrant women.

And there is not one country in the world that does not have a gender pay gap. In many countries, women are paid less and work in dangerous conditions. In all countries, women do more unpaid work than do men.

Time for Canada to act, says Oxfam

Canada's prime minister professes to be a feminist and Oxfam Canada says now is the time for his government to set policies to reflect that. The government is currently holding pre-budget consultations across the country and Oxfam Canada will present its views. It also staged actions outside the hearings today and will ask people to sign a petition in support of its call for action.

'Ending global poverty begins with women's rights'

Among the recommendations, Oxfam Canada is asking the government to enact legislation on pay equity for women, to promote universal child care, that it allocate 20 per cent of international aid to "programs that specifically aim to advance women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment" and it wants at least \$100 million to directly fund women's right organizations.

"Global inequality and ending global poverty is the issue," says Stefov. "And here at Oxfam we believe that ending global poverty begins with women's rights."

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Region: Canada ^[3]

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