

Promises into progress: Feminist Scorecard 2018^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF^[2]

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 2018 oxfam turning feminist promises into progress report.pdf ^[3]	1.21 MB

Introduction

Last year, Oxfam Canada launched its first Feminist Scorecard. With a bold feminist vision and elected on a promise of inclusive growth, our view was that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government were wellplaced to take ambitious action to tackle the twin struggles of gender and economic inequality at home and abroad. Given Oxfam's commitment to supporting women's rights and gender equality our objective with the Feminist Scorecard was to assess the government's progress in turning feminist words into action.

Feminist Scorecard 2018 continues this tradition. It assesses the steps that the government took between March 2017 and February 2018 to make meaningful progress towards achieving women's rights and gender equality from a feminist perspective. Progress is assessed across eight policy areas: representation and leadership; global development; climate change and extractives; care work; genderbased violence; tax; conflict and crisis; and jobs and pay equity.

There is no doubt that the government is making policy and spending decisions to advance this agenda. Over the past year, feminists have celebrated several wins - Canada's first Feminist International Assistance Policy, the launch of the second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the development of Canada's first gender budget, the passing of federal legislation on sexual harassment and violence and the creation of the Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, just to name a few. Budget 2018, Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class, further delivered spending commitments in a number of areas, ranging from funding for women's organizations to "use it or lose it" second caregiver leave to ending violence against women to increasing the international aid budget. These are tangible policy and spending decisions that will advance gender equality and women's rights.

However, as this scorecard shows, there is still much work to do. We must situate these victories in a broader context. The world is facing multiple crises – economic inequality, climate change, displacement and violence – and women are disproportionately affected, especially women with intersecting identities. At the same time, hard-won women's rights have been clawed back in many parts of the world. Here in Canada, while there has been progress, considerable challenges remain. For example, violence against women and girls and gender-based violence continue to permeate many parts of our society. Women, especially racialized, Indigenous and immigrant women, remain over-represented in vulnerable and precarious work. Families continue to struggle to find decent and affordable child care and have to make difficult decisions as a result.

As we continue the fight to end inequality, it becomes particularly important to sharpen the focus on intersectionality, so we better address how different women face different degrees of discrimination. Indigenous women, racialized women, immigrant and refugee women, disabled women and the LGBTQI2 community experience wage inequality, access to public services and opportunities to contribute to and influence leadership differently, and policy and spending decisions must address these differences.

We congratulate the Canadian government for making serious policy commitments to advancing gender equality and realizing women's rights. Gender inequality was dismissed as a side issue for too long and women around the world have borne the brunt. In the era of #MeToo and #TimesUp the government has the opportunity to contribute to a massive shift on women's rights. The time is now. Canadian women, and women of the world, are counting on it.

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