

Wins for women at home and abroad, but issues like decent work and childcare still need to be pushed over the finish line: Oxfam ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

(Ottawa) Over the past year, the federal government's bold feminist words have translated into significant policies and strategies to advance gender equality at home and abroad, but new initiatives often lacked the budgets required to achieve a long-lasting impact, according to a new report from Oxfam Canada.

In the lead up to International Women's Day, Oxfam Canada's third annual Feminist Scorecard, Turning Feminist Progress into Lasting Change, grades the Canadian government on its progress between March 2018 and February 2019 in eight policy areas. Oxfam uses a traffic light approach (red, yellow and green), indicating very little, some, or significant progress.

Two categories received a green rating this year: women's leadership and representation, and global leadership on women's rights. All other categories received a yellow rating.

"Under this government, we've seen considerable commitments to advance gender equality. Some of the major milestones in 2018 include the creation of the Department of Women and Gender Equality, legislating pay equity and gender budgeting, increased funding for the domestic women's movement, and the implementation of the Feminist International Assistance Policy. These measures will contribute to positive changes in the lives of women and girls," said Lauren Ravon, Oxfam Canada's Director of Policy and Campaigns.

However, many considerable challenges remain and show there is room for improvement, in particular when it comes to women's economic equality. Too many women in Canada and around the world are still stuck in precarious, low-paying jobs, and shoulder a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work. Add to that the difficulty of finding affordable and accessible childcare, and it's no wonder women have a hard time pursuing decent employment opportunities.

"Childcare is a key component of a feminist agenda and much more needs to be done to ensure all families in Canada have access to affordable and quality childcare," Ravon said.

The scorecard shows the government took some important steps in key areas, but new initiatives to advance gender equality often fell short of the mark because they were under resourced.

"Over the past three years, the government has laid the foundation for a more equal and inclusive Canada, and we congratulate it for its steadfast commitment to feminist policy-making. But there are a lot of issues that haven't yet reached the finish line. On the domestic front, we want to see a move towards universal childcare, steps to ensure workers can earn a living wage, and increased investments in fighting gender-based violence. On the international front, Canada's aid envelopes continue to be significantly smaller than some of its global peers; an increase in the aid budget is required to live up to the promise of the government's new Feminist International Assistance Policy."

"Looking toward Budget 2019 and the remaining months of its mandate, the government needs to inject the funds needed to turn feminist progress into lasting change," Ravon said.

Related link: Turning feminist progress into lasting change: Feminist Scorecard 2019 ^[3]

Region: Canada ^[4]

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