



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Game-changer: Canada's new feminist approach to foreign assistance makes Canada global leader

Global Affairs' commitment of \$150 million over 5 years to women's rights organizations in Global South is historic

(OTTAWA, June 9, 2017) The MATCH International Women's Fund and Nobel Women's Initiative are reacting positively to International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Global Affairs Canada for the announcement earlier today of \$150 million over 5 years for women's rights organizations in the Global South. It is the single largest investment of its kind to date from any country.

"This is a game changer. From Syria and Yemen to Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, it is the grassroots women's groups that are doing the heavy lifting to help communities respond to crisis, build peace and bring about gender equality," said Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee, who was in Ottawa in April, and met with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau to ask Canada to fund women rights organizations.

"This makes Canada a global leader in in putting the power back in the hands of women," said Gbowee.

Until now, less than a percentage point of gender-based funding provided by Canada to civil society organizations around the world has reached women's rights organizations directly. In 2013, out of a total of \$562 million dollars, women's organizations received only \$1.7 million.

"Minister Bibeau's leadership is bold and courageous and it marks an important shift in Canadian foreign policy" said Jess Tomlin, The MATCH International Women's Fund President and CEO. "We look forward to working closely with her office to ensure this new model reaches those women's rights organizations quickly and effectively—and that the funding's impact is maximized."

Until today's announcement, the single largest government investor in women's rights was the Netherlands. In 2008, they created a fund that provided 77 million Euro over four years; this fund was renewed in 2012 and 2016.

Canada's new feminist funding model will finally enable women leaders on the ground to be supported through flexible, non-project specific funding—allowing them to set their own agenda and respond where the need in their community is greatest. The funding is expected to begin flowing before fiscal year end.

"This is an important first big step towards changing the way Canada's delivers aid—from treating women as beneficiaries of aid to partners for change," said Nobel Women's Initiative's Acting Executive Director, Rachel Vincent, "Canada is showing the world that investing in women and gender equality is an essential to bring about peace and security around the globe—and that benefits everyone, including Canadians."

[The Nobel Women's Initiative](#) brings together six women Nobel peace laureates—Shirin Ebadi (Iran), Tawakkol Karman (Yemen), Mairead Maguire (Northern Ireland), Jody Williams (U.S.), Leymah Gbowee (Liberia) and Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala)—to support women human rights defenders around the globe. @NobelWomen

[The MATCH International Women's Fund](#) The MATCH International Women's Fund is Canada's only global fund for women, girls, and trans* people. Working at the intersection of women's rights and innovation, The MATCH Fund provides direct financial support to grassroots women's rights organizations in the global South. We fund innovative and brave creative and courageous women to dismantle barriers, challenge perceptions, and change the world for women and girls. @MATCHIntFund

QUOTES

"Grassroots women's organizations at the forefront of protecting our planet and its people receive little or no funding for their work. These women risk violence on a daily basis to do this vital work—and the Canadian government's decision to fund them is welcome proof of the Prime Minister's claim that he is a feminist."

- **Joanna Maycock is Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby (EWL).**

"Canada has shown the world that words are not enough—concrete actions are needed. This feminist fund allows us to plan for real, long-term change and not simply for the next six or 12 months."

- **Julienne Lusenge, co-founder of SOFEPADI and director of Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises.**

"Women at the grassroots are the ones making significant and tangible change. Canada clearly understands that peace, democracy, and human rights are profoundly impacted when women's rights are championed."

- **Valerie Hudson, professor and author of *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy*; named one of the Top 100 Global Thinkers by *Foreign Policy* in 2009.**

MEDIA AVAILABILITY

The following spokespeople and experts, working in women's rights and international development, will be available to comment during a range of times following the announcement, and in the coming days:

- Rachel Vincent, Acting Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative
- Jess Tomlin, President and CEO, The MATCH International Women's Fund
- Ketty Nyivabandi, poet and women's rights defender (from Burundi, lives in Ottawa) – Bilingual
- Yvette Ashiri, Fédération Femmes Enfants Avenir Monde (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, lives in Ottawa– Francophone)

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, including interviews with the above-mentioned people:

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