

Action Coalition 2: Economic Justice and Rights

The key priorities and actions outlined in this document are based on extensive discussions within the Action Coalition 2: Economic Justice and Rights Working Group of the B+25 Network. For the Beijing +25 review, there are six Action Coalitions centring on critical areas for women's rights and gender equality: Gender-Based Violence, Economic Justice and Rights, Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Feminist Action for Climate Justice, Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality, and Feminist Movements and Leadership, plus the GEF Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Actions.

Overview of the Issue in Canada

- Women with a university degree and working full time earn 15% less annually on average than men with a university degree, and women who work in trades earn 40% less than their male peers.¹
- Women are overrepresented in part-time work at 25.7%, compared to 12.2% for men—these numbers haven't budged in two decades.²
- Immigrant women are employed at rates 10% lower than Canadian-born women and 14% lower than immigrant men. The employment rate for Indigenous women is 11% lower than non-Indigenous women and 6% lower than it is for Indigenous men.³

Economic justice and rights are essential to achieving gender equality for women and girls in all their diversity. These rights are the focus of Action Coalition 2, and central to all six Action Coalitions stemming from the Beijing Platform for Action.

Pay equity is essential to creating equitable labour conditions and a justice-based economy. Access to high-quality, equitable employment with livable wages and benefits, including pensions, is essential for all workers—full or part time, temporary or casual—in all sectors. In addition, labour market segregation, both horizontal (the concentration of

¹ Statistics Canada (2016), as cited in: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2019). *Unfinished Business: A Parallel Report on Canada's Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/updates/unfinished-business/>

² Statistics Canada, as cited in *Unfinished Business* (2019)

³ Statistics Canada (2018), as cited in *Unfinished Business* (2019)

women in certain sectors) and vertical (the concentration of women in positions with lower pay and ranking) must be addressed. Employment standards and occupational health and safety legislation must also be extended to workers in non-standard employment. Priority for creating broad access to training, mentoring, and apprenticeship opportunities supports increased entrepreneurship led by women. Data disaggregated for gender is crucial for critical analysis of the experiences of racialized women, women with disabilities, women with children, senior women, and others.

Regardless of the reason – lack of access to work, pregnancy, or disability – unemployed women require access to livable incomes that are sufficient, stable, predictable and adjusted for regional economic variations. Canada must raise its poverty reduction efforts to sufficiently address groups at highest risk for extreme poverty.

Women, and racialized women in particular, are disproportionately represented in Canada’s care economy—a highly undervalued and chronically under-funded sector, whose workers commonly face poor working conditions and marginal rates of pay. The International Labour Organization (ILO)’s [5R Framework for Decent Care Work](#) highlights the need to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, provide paid care workers with more and decent work, and guarantee care workers’ representation with employers and the state. It is essential to fulfill Canada’s plan for a national system of early learning and childcare. The inclusion of a Federal Secretariat to oversee funding and policy, research, and evaluation, as well as the introduction of a national long-term care labour force strategy in this plan would establish care as a systemic priority.

Urgent action is required to recognize housing as a human right by improving the [National Housing Strategy Act](#) and addressing the specific needs of women and girls in all their diversity. It is critical to ensure that women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals have access to safe, secure, inclusive, and affordable housing. Land management must be returned to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and Bill S-3 must be implemented and enforced in order that all First Nations women and their descendants entitled to status are registered under the Indian Act.

Regressive tax measures undermine women’s economic security and exploit the gendered division of labour. The government must commission an independent review of the tax system to identify and propose progressive reforms that focus on federal revenue generation and stability.

Key Commitments per Action Coalition Blueprint

As part of the 25-year review process of the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Action Coalition leaders have defined the following concrete set of key actions to be realized by 2026:

Action 1: By 2026, increase the number of countries with a comprehensive set of measures in gender-responsive public and private quality care services, and law and policy reforms, including through investments of recommended 3-10% of national income and creation of up to 80 million decent care jobs to **recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work and reward paid work and represent care workers, while guaranteeing care worker's decent pay and labour rights, including in the private sector.**

Action 2: Create an inclusive and **enabling legal and policy environment** and engage women to **expand decent work** in the formal and informal economy to **reduce the number of working women living in poverty** by 2026 by a recommended 17 million and decrease the gap in labour force participation between prime-age women and men with small children by half, resulting in an additional 84 million women joining the labour force.

Action 3: Expand women's **access to and control over productive resources** through increasing women's access to and control over **land, gender-responsive financial products and services, and the number of firms** owned by women by 2026. In doing so,

- Secure access to ownership and **control over land and housing** is increased for 7 million women;
- The gender gap in women's financial inclusion is reduced to 6% by increasing both formal and informal **financial inclusion**, including for women at risk of being excluded from formal financial services;
- The number of women's **economic empowerment national programs integrating digital financial services** and participation through gender-responsive platforms is increased;
- The number of **firms owned** by women is increased by 25% in all contexts, including in fragile and conflict situations.

Action 4: Design and implement **gender-responsive macro-economic plans, budget reforms and stimulus packages** so that the number of women and girls living in poverty is reduced by 85 million including through quality public social protection floors and systems by 2026.

Realizing Economic Justice and Rights

Key Priorities

Care Economy/Care Work:

- Early Learning and Child Care System
 - Establish a publicly funded and publicly managed universal Early Learning and Child Care system
 - Implement the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework Agreement
 - Develop measures to improve wages, benefits, training, and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and care workers
- High quality Care and Long-Term Care (LTC)
 - Invest in the creation of high quality public services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities, in both congregate and home-based settings
 - Ensure transparency, accountability, affordability, and accessibility, inseparable from labour rights for care workers
 - Improve access to public care services for everyone requiring care, particularly senior women, and women with disabilities, to reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work
- Labour Rights
 - Improve working conditions
 - Increase the number of work hours available to each worker
 - Provide fair, livable wages and benefits
 - Provide access to training opportunities

Decent work: Reduce the number of working women living in poverty with:

- High-quality, equitable employment opportunities
 - Include paid sick days and leave
 - Support work-life balance to allow employees to address domestic responsibilities, self-care, and care for others
 - Provide supports and accommodations for women with disabilities
 - Support unionization
- Reliable, livable incomes
 - Address the gender pay gap and labour market segregation
 - Recognize the lived realities of diverse women and regional economic variations

- Realize the promises of the [Pay Equity Act](#) and the [Employment Equity Act](#)
- Reduction of Discrimination
 - Provide anti-racism and anti-ableism training for employers and workers
 - Examine and reform policies and practices that create structural and systemic racism, ableism and sexism in the workplace, including individual discrimination, unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, stereotyping, and prejudice
- Work permit conditions that
 - Recognize foreign credentials and broaden employment options for immigrant women
 - Are open (not employer-specific) and facilitate permanent residency for migrant workers
 - Ensure equal application of employment standards and occupational health and safety legislation for migrant workers, sex workers, and other workers employed in non-standard or informal economies

Control Over Land & Housing, and Financial Inclusion: Improve affordability and accessibility with:

- Homelessness
 - Immediately implement the right to housing for women, girls, and gender diverse individuals
 - Fund affordable and accessible housing programs and projects
 - Develop an Urban Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy
 - Provide the office of the Federal Housing Advocate with adequate budget, staff, and resources without further delay
- Accessible, culturally appropriate housing
 - Provide housing that accommodates the needs of people with disabilities
 - Ensure housing access that is considerate of diverse lived experiences, including newcomers, seniors, youth, Black, Indigenous, racialized and multigenerational communities, people with precarious immigration status, and LGBTQ+ people
- Economic empowerment and digital financial services
 - Improve educational programs for financial and digital literacy
 - Ensure affordable and accessible internet and internet technology
 - Promote safety in digital spaces
 - Increase digital literacy training and knowledge to combat online exploitation, predominantly experienced by senior women
 - Enhance broadband expansion with a \$2 billion increase to the Universal Broadband Fund for federal, provincial and territorial collaboration over 5 years

- Business ownership for women
 - Finance, fund, and invest in women entrepreneurs
 - Implement a Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy
 - Support networking opportunities for women, with initiatives and opportunities specifically for women from marginalized communities
 - Provide tax incentives for investment in women-led companies
- Post-secondary education
 - Provide student grants
 - Restore post-secondary education funding to the 1983 GDP level of 0.56%
 - Forgive student loan debt
 - Provide debt relief programs (expand needs-based grants; eliminate barriers to part-time students; limit interest rates for loans to prime; expand interest relief programs)

Macro-economic plans: improve income security

- Poverty reduction
 - Introduce progressive tax reforms to eliminate gender inequities and facilitate equitable generation and distribution of societal resources
 - Strengthen income support programs, including in rural and remote regions, for groups at highest risk of extreme poverty (single mothers, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities)
 - Provide training, mentoring, and opportunities for apprenticeship and entrepreneurship to support business ownership for women
 - Eliminate food insecurity, especially in Northern communities
 - Expand healthcare coverage and services (mental health, Pharmacare, long term care, dental care, etc.)
- Intersectional gender lens
 - Apply an intersectional gender lens at the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)
 - Consult feminist economists and apply GBA+ in all income security improvement measures and resource the comprehensive application of an intersectional lens in all income security reforms and related policy development
 - Initiate a permanent Task Force on Women and the Economy, with diverse and broad representation, including civil society
 - Collect and integrate disaggregated gender data that addresses realities and challenges faced by various groups of diverse women and girls

Take Action

<p style="text-align: center;">Government Actions <i>Holding the government to account</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Grassroots Actions <i>Feminist Work</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Budget 2021 commitments to establish a national system of early learning and childcare, including a federal Secretariat to oversee funding and policy, research, and evaluation • Immediately implement and ensure equitable funding for the right to housing, with consideration for the needs of different groups of women, girls and gender diverse people (newcomers, seniors, youth, Black, Indigenous, racialized communities, people with precarious immigration status, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking and victims of violence) • Fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) to increase control of land for First Nations, Inuit and Métis women • Enhance broadband expansion with additional \$2b investment over 5 years to the Universal Broadband Fund for federal, provincial and territorial collaborative projects • Increase investment in the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy to \$40 million per year for 5 years to increase women's access to financing, mentorship, training, and knowledge sharing • Increase funding to the Canada Social Transfer (CST) by \$4 billion, and provide sufficient, stable and predictable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for meaningful participation and remuneration of civil society organizations in the development of gender-responsive macro-economic plans, budget reforms and stimulus/recovery packages • Advocate for the government to establish a publicly funded and publicly managed universal system of early learning and childcare with predictable and stable funding to provinces and territories increased by \$2 billion annually, with a goal of 1% of GDP by 2026 • Advocate for the government to adopt measures, key performance indicators on care, and targeted capacity building for Global Affairs Canada staff that systematically prioritize care in all supported projects, even where care is not the primary focus. This includes the implementation of baseline care assessments such as Oxfam's Rapid Care Analysis and Household Care Survey, and feminist MEAL frameworks • Advocate for the creation of a comprehensive Anti-Racism Act for Canada that: entrenches the Anti-Racism Secretariat; establishes stable levels of funding; includes concrete, actionable goals, measurable targets; and addresses all forms of structural and systemic racism – including anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and Islamophobia,

funding that recognizes regional economic, variations

- Reduce poverty in Canada by 50% by 2026, targeting extreme poverty and poverty among groups at highest risk (single mothers, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities)
- Ratify ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers
- With the coming into force of the Pay Equity Act on Aug 31, 2021, create a proactive pay equity regime for federal public and private sectors to ensure federally regulated workplaces provide equal pay for work of equal value without gender bias
- Produce disaggregated gender data
- Enhance the National Advisory Council on Poverty or reinstate past councils such as the National Council of Welfare
- Audit the National Housing Strategy to confirm alignment with the 25% (33% CMHC) commitment; develop an action plan to ensure meeting the 25% (33% CMHC) target
- Implement federal commitments following national dialogues on [Addressing anti-Indigenous racism in health systems](#)
- Ratify the [ILO Convention 190](#) on Violence and Harassment and tripartite discussion about C190 implementation

and the impacts of racist misogyny against women, girls and gender-diverse people

- Advocate for the government to commit to transparent consultations with feminist economists and civil society policy analysts to encourage collaboration and ensure gender responsiveness with respect to economic justice and rights

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