

February 4, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A 0A6



**BPW Canada**

[www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com)

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) respectfully submits the enclosed Brief for your consideration and action. The items herein represent the concerns brought forward by our members from Clubs across the country. Resolutions were presented, discussed, debated and accepted at the Annual General Meeting held in Montréal in August 2019.

As a non-partisan organization, we have worked for ninety years to urge governments to continue the inclusion of equal rights for women in legislation. It is through this process of voicing the issues outlined in this Brief and engaging in open dialogue with your government that we can together build a strong and thriving Canada.

On behalf of BPW Canada I take this opportunity to acknowledge **Motion 70** to declare a national “**Equal Pay Day**”, a recommendation submitted by BPW Canada. This issue continues to be important to women and declaring Equal Pay Day will help to bring awareness of this inequity to Canadians. It is only when leaders from government, business and civil society work together that we will truly advance the status of women in our country.

We respectfully request that you and the appropriate Ministers review the enclosed resolutions and be available to meet with our delegation at a time in keeping with your schedules. A member of the delegation will follow up with this correspondence with a personal contact to confirm the preferred meeting times and dates.

We have forwarded this Brief to the Leaders of the Opposition and the Ministers addressed in our resolutions so that they may be apprised of our positions on the topics herein.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Linda Davis'.

Linda Davis  
President 2018-2020,  
BPW Canada

**Submission  
to  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

**PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**BY**



**The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women  
*La Federation Canadienne des Femmes de Carrières  
Commerciales et Professionnelles***

**Member of the International Federation of  
Business and Professional Women**

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**Working towards improving economic, political, social and  
employment conditions for Women in Canada  
*“Women Working for Working Women”***

**February 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) is an equality-seeking group working towards improving the economic, political, social and employment conditions for women. We are “Women Working for Working Women”. Our membership includes women from a variety of professions and occupations, including women entrepreneurs. BPW Canada develops the professional and leadership potential of women through education, awareness, advocacy and mentoring within the supportive network of BPW.

In 1930, BPW Canada was a founding member of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs. BPW International has Consultative Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is the recognized voice of working women in over 95 countries worldwide.

For ninety years we have advocated for women’s rights at all levels and have played a significant role in achieving advancements for a just and equal society. For more information on our achievements, please visit our website at [www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com).

Currently, local BPW Clubs across Canada offer a range of opportunities and activities for members to enhance their: Awareness, Advocacy & Action on women’s issues; Leadership Skills & Career Advancement; Supportive Networking; and Personal Development.

The BPW Canada Annual General Meeting was held on August 9-11, 2019 in Montréal. The resolutions contained in this document were initiated at the club level, researched and formulated, and brought to the 2019 Annual General Meeting where they were discussed and debated. These accepted resolutions are herein presented for your consideration.

The issues raised by BPW Canada are issues of concern to our society as a whole. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with our federal government representatives to present our resolutions and our concerns in more detail.

Linda Davis, President 2018-2020, BPW Canada

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## **Resolution #1: Implementation Of A Just Job Transition Strategy For Canada's Economic Development As A Result Of Climate Change And Advancements In Technology**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to implement a just economic transition policy, including jobs transition using an intersectional and collaborative approach to climate change;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to set goals for proportional inclusion of the population of women, indigenous peoples, and visible minorities and people with disabilities in decision-making related to climate change and jobs transition;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to work with the provinces to develop an education intervention at all levels from primary to post-secondary and re-training opportunities to address the anticipated skills gap resulting from climate change and automation.

### **Rationale**

Climate change is an urgent global issue which is currently being addressed by policy makers. The future of work and the economy in Canada is anticipated to drastically change in the next 15-20 years due to climate change action and rapid increases in automation and technology. Women, indigenous peoples, and racialized people are disproportionately affected by both climate change and economic transition, yet are under-represented at all levels of decision-making.

Several studies have suggested that Canada is one of a few global economies that may experience a net economic gain brought about by changing climatic conditions by transitioning into a lower-carbon economy. As such, Canada has both a responsibility and an incentive to act as a global leader to meaningfully engage women, indigenous peoples, and racial minorities while supporting low carbon alternatives that mitigate climate change's negative impacts and benefit all Canadian workers.

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## **Resolution #2: Reducing Implicit Gender Biases And Increasing Women's Participation And Success In The Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Computer Science (STEM) Fields**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, the Minister for Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to continue working towards the eradication of gender bias in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Computer Science (STEM) fields, at the educational and professional levels;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, the Minister for Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to implement a taskforce with the goals of continuing to develop and implement educational programs and mentorship opportunities that encourage women's participation on the STEM fields, from early childhood through their university studies;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that BPW Canada petitions the Government of Canada, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister for Economic Development and Official Languages, the Minister for Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to take affirmative steps to increase the persistence and representation of women in STEM fields post graduation.

### **Rationale**

While Canadian women today constitute the majority of all university graduates (about 59%), they are severely underrepresented in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science (STEM) fields, with only 39% of female graduates obtaining university degrees in those fields. Gender plays a substantial role in determining the success of a STEM graduate in the labour market, making it more difficult for women STEM graduates to be employed in their area of study or specialty, and achieve the same career opportunities and salary expectations as their male counterparts. Due to the implicit bias against women in STEM fields, women drop out in alarming rates from pursuing careers in these fields, with half of them deciding to move to other occupations, after devoting 10-12 years in those fields. Due to implicit bias, girls and women are discouraged from pursuing careers that make the best use of their talents in the math and sciences.

A concerted effort from the Government of Canada is required to reduce gender biases in STEM fields, encourage educational and mentoring programs to encourage girls' and women's participation and retention in STEM fields.



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## **RESOLUTION #3: Resourcing Actions Against Human Trafficking in Canada**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, the Minister of Health, the Minister for Families, Children and Social Development, and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, to work in conjunction with individual provinces, to increase resources (personnel and funding) for the purpose of providing nation-wide medical, psychological, trafficking trauma-informed counselling support, provision of basic needs (e.g. housing) and court support under the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking or its replacement so that the range, quality and timely delivery of traffic specific services is consistent and universal across Canada; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to ensure that any current and new funding related to research and data collection has necessary funding for the resulting needs required to connect victims with community resources and provision of support resources;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to provide resources for the coordination of intelligence with and dissemination of information to international and local partners and stakeholders involved in combatting Human Trafficking activities.

### **Rationale**

Canada ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in 1981 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 (including the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography) (article 11). Canada is legally bound to put their provisions into practice.

In 2012, the Government of Canada established the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP-CHT) e NAP-CHT and granted a budget of \$25 million, \$500,000 of which was to be used for supporting victims of Human Trafficking. The NAP-CHT expired 2016, with no replacement program or increased funding to support victims of human trafficking.

The February 2018 federal budget included new funding for a national human trafficking hotline, but did not appear to provide any additional funding for support of victims. The current funding made available to combat human trafficking appears heavily weighted to data collection, research and criminal prosecution with a current shortfall of funding allocated toward supporting the actual victims of human trafficking.

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