

November 5, 2021

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



www.bpwcanada.com

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) respectfully submits the enclosed 2021 Brief for your consideration and action. The items herein represent the concerns brought forward by our members from across the country. Resolutions were debated and accepted at the virtual Annual General Meeting held August 14th, 2021. We have also enclosed resolutions that were adopted at our International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Virtual Congress held in March 2021.

As a non-partisan organization, we have worked for over 90 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 the federal government's financial and policy commitments to establish national early learning and child care, an issue that is dear to us as we approach nearly 50 years since our first resolution on this topic. Affordable and publicly-funded child care is particularly important as we reflect on the toll of the pandemic and its disproportionate impact on women which furthered the economic gap between men and women. Economic empowerment, housing security, and safe conditions for essential workers are priorities for recovery, keeping in mind the importance of an intersectional approach. We appreciate your awareness of this situation. 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 BPW Canada 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 cursive script, appearing to read 'K. Gorgerat'.

Karin Gorgerat
President 2020-2022
BPW Canada

Copy to:

The Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Opposition, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Erin.Otoole@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Yves-Francois.Blanchet@parl.gc.ca

Annamie Paul, Leader of the Green Party. annamie.paul@annamiepaul.ca

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Chrystia.Freeland@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Dominic.LeBlanc@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Jean-Yves.Duclos@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A0A6, Email: Melanie.Joly@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Harjit Singh Sajjan, Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Harjit.Sajjan@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Francois-Philippe.Champagne@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Karina.Gould@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Seamus.oregan@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Pablo.Rodriguez@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Mary F.Y. Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Mary.Ng@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Public Services and Procurement, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Filomena.Tassi@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: David.Lametti@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Daniel Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6. Email: Dan.Vandal@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Sean Simon Andrew Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Sean.Fraser@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Gudie.Hutchings@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Marci.Ien@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Helena.Jaczek@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Kamal Khera, Minister of Seniors, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Kamal.Khera@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Email: Pascale.St-Onge@parl.gc.ca

**Submission
to**

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JUSTIN TRUDEAU

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA



The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women

**La Fédération Canadienne des Femmes de Carrières Commerciales et
Professionnelles**

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

bpwcanada@bpwcanada.com

www.bpwcanada.com

**Working towards improving economic, political, social, and
employment conditions for women in Canada**

“Women Working for Working Women”

November 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BPW Canada Resolutions

Resolutions approved at The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women Virtual Annual General Meeting, August 14, 2021

Introduction

1. Independent Federal Oversight to Ensure Health and Safety of Essential Workers
2. Fully Subsidized Public Childcare
3. Tax Incentives to Encourage Greater Representation of Women in Senior Management Positions and on Boards
4. Support to Bring an Intersectional Gendered Lens to Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
5. Support for a National Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Program
6. The Denial of Women's Rights in Afghanistan

BPW International Resolutions

Resolutions presented by The International Federation of Business and Professional Women and adopted by The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (March 2021)

1. Gender Responsive Budgeting
2. Gender Pay Gap at Retirement
3. Public Procurement for Women Owned Businesses
4. Gender Equality in Sport
5. Skills Development for Migrant Women and Recognition of their Foreign Credentials
6. Access for Rural Women to Technology
7. Development of National Biodiversity Strategies
8. Provision of Alternatives to Detention for Women and Girls

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 since 1947 and is the recognized voice of working women in over 95 countries worldwide. As of September 30, 2021, BPW Canada also has special Consultative Status.

For over 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.

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 Virtual Annual General Meeting was held on August 14, 2021. The resolutions contained in this document were initiated at the club level, researched, formulated, and brought to the 2021 Annual General Meeting where they were debated and put to a vote. We are also enclosing resolutions that were passed at the International Federation of Business and Professional Women Congress which was held virtually in March 2021. These accepted resolutions are herein presented for your consideration.

We look forward to the opportunity to meet with our federal government representatives to present our resolutions and our concerns in more detail.

Karin Gorgerat, President 2020-2022, BPW Canada president@bpwcanada.com

Colleen Babiuk-Ilkiw, Vice President, Resolutions and By-Laws, 2020-2022, BPW Canada resolutions@bpwcanada.com



RESOLUTION #1: Independent Federal Oversight to Ensure Health and Safety of Essential Workers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Health, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to create an independent oversight plan to methodically evaluate worksites that gather workers in large numbers, e.g., plants and factories, to ensure they meet the health and safety standards in light of this global health crisis and to prioritize vaccine access, in addition to what the provincial government is already doing, and to bolster workplace inspections and assessments;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to provide a safety net for immigrant women, who make up over 20% of the female population in Canada, and migrant women (temporary foreign workers who often become part of the 25% of immigrant women in Canada) who by reason of their temporary status are often excluded from accessing COVID-19 relief and other healthcare provisions, wage subsidies and other income support and social protection;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and the Minister of Labour to devise a system where essential workers may report anonymously any inadequate working conditions that exist in their places of work that put their health, safety and well being at serious risk so that coordinated guidance can be provided through provincial collaboration.

Rationale

Since 1998 BPW Canada has shown support for the *UN International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (1990)*. The Cargill meat processing plant in High River, Alberta has been linked to almost 1000 cases of the novel coronavirus and death of a female worker as well as two male workers of the plant. This is the largest outbreak connected to a single site in Canada. The plant is considered an “essential service” and employs 2000 workers, many of whom are female, migrants and members of visible minorities.

Even before the plant was formally asked to shut down temporarily in 2020, 85% of its workers were saying that they were afraid to go to work. The roles and responsibilities of the workers in these types of work environments involve close proximity and physical distancing is not possible. Meat packing plants are ideal environments for the spread of COVID-19 as the virus thrives in environments with lower temperatures and environments with very high or low humidity. Air quality is generally poor in meat packing plants, which often have inadequate air filtration systems.

References

CTV News. (2021, Feb 9). More than 200 cases of COVID-19 and one death linked to Alberta pork plant. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/more-than-200-cases-of-covid-19-and-one-death-linked-to-alberta-pork-plant-1.5301140>

Statistics Canada. (n.d.). *Chart 1 Female immigrants as a proportion of total female population, Canada, 1911 to 2011 and 2021 to 2031 projections*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14217/c-g/c-g01-eng.htm>

Warren, Wilson J. (2021). The Meat Industry Goes Back to the Jungle. *Current History*, 120 (822):21–27. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.822.21>



RESOLUTION #2: Fully Subsidized Public Childcare

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of Finance to immediately commence the process of consultation with stakeholders (provinces, territories, parents, childcare providers and employers) to quickly and effectively provide adequate funding through the budget released on April 19, 2021, for fully-subsidized public childcare for all parents, including after-school programs and options allowing for non-traditional work schedules, such as shift work and workers who require longer hours of care to accommodate working 12-hour shifts;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of Finance to establish a National Childcare Secretariat to coordinate with stakeholders in the provinces and territories to establish, monitor, and evaluate measures of early learning and childcare quality standards;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of Finance to develop a plan to address the shortage of early childhood educators by:

1. Standardizing certification criteria, including foreign credential recognition, across Canada;
2. Enhancing online training programs and fast-track in-school credentials;
3. Developing financial support for underemployed populations to access these training opportunities; and
4. Standardizing the salary for early childhood educators sufficient to attract the best talent into the industry.

Rationale

BPW Canada has lobbied the Government of Canada since the 1970s for support managing childcare as Canada (outside Quebec) has one of the least affordable systems among countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Affordable child care is substantiated by Canada's commitment to the UN Declaration of the Rights of Child and supports the Women's Empowerment Principles.

The high cost of childcare is a contributing factor to the inequalities that women face in the workplace. Women have an even more difficult situation during the pandemic due to having to work from home and manage home schooling and childcare during their regular work hours. According to a YWCA (2020) report *A Feminist Recovery Plan for Canada*, "there is no recovery if we leave women, two-spirit, and gender-diverse people behind".

Update

BPW acknowledges the government's 2021 budget and policy commitment to early learning and child care, and encourages continuation of pre-election work for provincial/territorial-federal agreements.

References

OECD (June,2020). Is Childcare Affordable? *Policy Brief on Employment, Labour and Social Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/OECD-Is-Childcare-Affordable.pdf>.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (September 2, 1990). Convention on the Rights of the Child. *United Nations*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>.

Women's Empowerment Principles (2021). Company-Supported Early Childhood Education and Care. *UN Women*. Retrieved from <https://www.weps.org/resource/company-supported-early-childhood-education-and-care>.

YWCA Canada (2020). A Feminist Recovery Plan for Canada. *YWCA Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.feministrecovery.ca/>.



RESOLUTION #3: Tax Incentives to Encourage Greater Representation of Women in Senior Management Positions and on Boards

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to implement a tax incentive for a five year period, which can be claimed by public and private companies, if throughout a given taxation year, more than 35% of such company's board members and senior officers are qualified women, and more than 21% of such company's board members and senior officers are qualified members of under-represented groups, which equates to achieving 70% of the two goals set forth by the Canadian Government in its 50-30 Challenge;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically, the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to publicly announce the creation of this new tax incentive and to explain the reasons why it is important to offer such an incentive.

Rationale

While women make up almost 50% of the Canadian labour force, they hold less than 20% of board directorships and less than 17% of executive officer positions in Canada. This is despite women obtaining more than 50% of the Bachelor's degrees and 50% of the Master's degrees in Business, Management and Public Administration.

The approach taken in Canada to date has been to adopt a "comply or explain" regime for publicly listed entities. Since 2014, TSX listed corporations have had to disclose details about the representation of women on boards and in senior management as well as details on written diversity policies; however the total number of board seats held by women has only increased marginally and the number of women in senior management positions has largely remained flat.

Internationally, Canada is behind many other jurisdictions such as the UK, Australia and US to name a few.

Tax incentives have been successfully used by the Canadian government as a means of encouraging action on the part of participants in the private sector. One of the most prominent examples is the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Program which uses tax incentives (e.g., income tax deduction, an investment tax credit) to encourage Canadian businesses to participate.

References

Catalyst. (2016) Gender Diversity on Boards in Canada: Recommendations for Accelerating Progress, commissioned by the Government of Ontario. Retrieved from <https://www.catalyst.org/research/gender-diversity-on-boards-in-canada-recommendations-for-accelerating-progress/>

MacDougall, Andrew, Valley, John and Jeffrey, Jennifer. (2020). *Diversity Disclosure Practices: Diversity and leadership at Canadian public companies*. Retrieved from <https://www.osler.com/osler/media/Osler/reports/corporate-governance/Diversity-and-Leadership-in-Corporate-Canada-2020.pdf>

McKinsey&Company. (2017). *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Women%20matter/The%20power%20of%20parity%20Advancing%20womens%20equality%20in%20Canada/MGI-The-power-of-parity-Advancing-womens-equality-in-Canada-Full-report.ashx>

Statistics Canada. (2018). *Proportion of male and female postsecondary graduates, by field of study and International Standard Classification of Education*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710013502>



RESOLUTION #4: Support to Bring an Intersectional Gendered Lens to Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to use an intersectional gendered lens to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as it pertains to the rights of Indigenous women in accordance with UNDRIP Article 22(2).

Rationale

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a statement of the collective and individual rights that are necessary for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples around the world. In 2015 BPW Canada Resolution #3 urged the Government of Canada to adopt UNDRIP.

Bill C-15, An Act respecting the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* was acclaimed into law by Royal Assent on June 21, 2021. Further, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action # 43 called upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement UNDRIP as the framework for reconciliation.

Although women's human rights are formally codified under the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* and Indigenous peoples' human rights are codified under the *UNDRIP*, Indigenous women's rights are often neglected at international and local levels. The *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (2019) also includes a call, with the full participation of Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+, to fully comply with UNDRIP to eliminate gender discrimination in the Indian Act among other measures.

References

Government of Canada. (2019). Canadian Governments and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502914394/1557512757504>.

(2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. Canada. [Web Archive] Retrieved from the Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0028038/>

Gunn, Brenda L. (2018). Bringing a Gendered Lens to Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In UNDRIP Implementation More Reflections on the Braiding of International, Domestic and Indigenous Laws. *Special Report. Centre for International Governance Innovation*. Retrieved from <https://www.cigionline.org/publications/undrip-implementation-more-reflections-braiding-international-domestic-and-indigenous/>

UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249. Retrieved <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Resolution adopted by the General Assembly*, 2 October 2007, A/RES/61/295. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf



RESOLUTION #5: Support for a National Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Program

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and the Minister of Finance to design, budget, fund, and implement a National Guaranteed Basic Income Program to provide all adults an income-tested guaranteed livable income;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to measure the employment incentive effects, including for gender equity, of such a program on reducing Canada's poverty numbers.

Rationale

The 2018 Statistics Canada Report on poverty indicates that out of 3.2 million Canadians in poverty in 2018, 1.4 million or almost 45% are those 26.2% of single female parents who remain in poverty. 8.6% of women in Canada remained in poverty in 2018. Statistics Canada 2018 also indicated that 34% of First Nations women and girls, 21% of visible minority women and girls, 23% of women with disabilities, and 16% of senior women live in poverty.

Although norms are changing, women still perform most of the unpaid care, domestic, and volunteering work in Canada. As such, there is a gender-based equity rationale for recognizing this societally valuable work through a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI).

The pandemic has pushed women's participation in the labour force down to its lowest level in three decades, with 1.5 million women losing their jobs in the first two months of the 2020 recession.

GBI is proposed as a way to fix the efficiency- and equity-related challenges in the income security system, and is promoted as a superior alternative to Social Assistance (SA), which is inadequate, stigmatizes recipients through means testing, and creates work disincentives because of high clawback rates. The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls also recommends a guaranteed livable income.

A basic income could help eliminate the power differentials between men and women that still subject too many women to poverty and violence. The evidence shows that basic income improves family and community health and wellbeing, financial resilience, and access to education and training - all at an affordable cost.

References

Canadian Women's Foundation (2021). Retrieved from: <https://canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Fact-Sheet-WOMEN-POVERTY-September-2018.pdf>

Desjardins, D., and Freestone, C. (2021). COVID Further Clouded the Outlook for Canadian Women at Risk of Disruption. Retrieved from: <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/covid-further-clouded-the-outlook-for-canadian-women-at-risk-of-disruption/>.

Forget, E. L. (2020). *Basic Income for Canadians: From the Covid-19 Emergency to Financial Security for All*. James Lorimer & Company Ltd.

Koebel, K and Pohler, D. (2019). Expanding the Canada Workers Benefit to Design a Guaranteed Basic Income. *Canadian Public Policy*, 285 - 288. Retrieved from: <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/cpp.2019-016>

Lim, J. (2020 February 25). What the latest poverty figures show about who is poor in Canada. *iPolitics*. Retrieved from <https://ipolitics.ca/2020/02/25/what-the-latest-poverty-figures-show-about-who-is-poor-in-canada/>;

Moyser, M. and Burlock, A. (2018). Time use: Total work burden, unpaid work, and leisure. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/54931-eng.htm>.

Regehr, S. (2014). Basic Income and Gender Equality: Reflections on the Potential for Good Policy in Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/basic-income-and-gender-equality-reflections-potential-good-policy-canada>



RESOLUTION #6: The Denial of Women's Rights in Afghanistan

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada to urge the United Nations (UN) to prioritize the protection of women's human rights in Afghanistan, including the right to education and health care, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada to urge the United Nations (UN) to urge women, who are victims of abuse of their rights, to bring their cases before the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and to provide them with support and protection.

Rationale

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women acknowledges the progress in Women's Rights made in Afghanistan in the last twenty years and the Afghan Constitution which has solid protections in place for women as equal citizens. These rights and many others have deteriorated and are in peril of being lost due to the withdrawal of American troops and their allies as well as the rise of the Taliban.

Despite gains, Afghanistan has one of the highest infant mortality (40%) and maternal mortality (638 per 100 live births) rates in the world. According to Human Rights Watch (2017) the Afghan government reported 3.5 million children are out of school, with 85 percent being girls. Only 37 percent of adolescent girls are literate, compared to 66 percent of adolescent boys. About 60 per cent of girls aged 10 attend school. This falls to 30 percent by the age of 15. Once married, few girls are permitted to continue their education. Older girls, girls from low-income families, and girls living in rural areas are unlikely to continue their schooling. 80 percent of girls with disabilities are prevented from attending school. More than 35 percent of Afghan girls are married, due to forced and child marriages, before the age of 18 and nearly 10 percent before their 15th birthday (World Vision, 2021).

It is important that the Government of Canada, as a signatory to the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, acts to protect the Afghan women's and girls' human rights, and their unconditional right to education at all levels.

References

Barr, H. (July 2, 2021). UN Should Investigate Deadly Attacks on Afghan Civilians. *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/02/un-should-investigate-deadly-attacks-afghan-civilians>.

Human Rights Watch. (October 17, 2017). "I Won't Be A Doctor, and One Day You'll Be Sick": Girls' Access to Education in Afghanistan. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/afghanistan1017_web.pdf.

Human Rights Watch. (October 17, 2017). Afghanistan: Girls Struggle for an Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/17/afghanistan-girls-struggle-education>

Medica mondiale (2020). Where we work: Afghanistan. Retrieved from: <https://www.medicamondiale.org/en/where-we-work/afghanistan.html>

The United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

World Population Review (2021). Infant Mortality Rate by Country. Retrieved from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/infant-mortality-rate-by-country>

International Federation of Business and Professional Women



At the virtual Congress of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (March 2021), issues were presented and debated. For those resolutions passed, member Federations were asked to present them to their governments to continue or start to take action. At the BPW Canada Virtual AGM on August 14th, 2021, these resolutions were adopted.

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) has become one of the most influential international networks of business and professional women with affiliates in over 100 countries around the world. The root of BPW's advocacy is embedded in the work with the United Nations. BPW lobbied for the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and has supported many women's issues.

BPW continues its representation at UN Headquarters in New York, Vienna, Geneva; UN regional offices (UNECA, UNECE, UNESCAP, UNESCWA, UNECLAC); UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, FAO, UN DPI; Council of Europe; European Women's Lobby and continues to work closely with UNIFEM.

BPW International Resolution #1: Gender Responsive Budgeting

BPW International Resolves that all Affiliates:

- 1) urge their governments to adopt a Gender-responsive budgeting lens, including advocacy, gender impact analysis, and gender responsive budget documentation in close collaboration with women's organisations and civil society;
- 2) strongly advocate for their governments to identify those public spending lines that demonstrably and clearly advantage women and girls;
- 3) ensure a real-world gender budgeting approach focus on national and line ministry statistics agencies to ensure all government data is disaggregated by gender to allow for better spending analysis.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women recognizes the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada for enactment of the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act and continued refinement of tools, such as Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), to ensure the progression of gender equality.

Rationale

The *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* was passed by Parliament in December 2018, enshrining the government's commitment to decision-making that takes into account the impacts of policies on all types of Canadians. The Act legislated the government's commitment to publish information on the gender and diversity impacts of all new budget measures. Starting in Budget 2019, the government's budget documents have included analysis of the impacts of individual budget measures, providing transparency into the analysis that is performed as part of the policy development and budgeting processes.

GBA+ provides a framework to contextualize the range of personal attributes such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability and ensure that these factors do not limit success and inclusion. This analysis of proposed policy through a 'gender neutral' lens ensures policies contribute to (as opposed to inhibit) the progression of gender equality.

Building on the principles of good governance related to transparency, efficiency and accountability, GBA+ serves as a strategy to promote the goal of gender equality and gender mainstreaming by paying attention to programs, policies and initiatives.

BPW International Resolution #2: Gender Pay Gap at Retirement

BPW International Resolves that all Affiliates:

- 1) recognize the impact the gender pay gap has on women at retirement age;
- 2) urge their governments and states to identify factors that are involved and once identified put in place long term solutions so that women are no longer financially disadvantaged including but not limited to investigating the impact of unpaid and unrecognized work and its impact on the economy and solutions to address its contribution to the gender pay gap.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Seniors, and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to recognize and measure the impact of the gender pay gap on women at retirement age;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Seniors, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, to develop and put in place long term solutions to address the financial disadvantages of women in retirement age.

Rationale

Typically, the financial balances of women in retirement are 30-40% less than men across the globe. It's not news that women participate in the workforce for fewer years of their lives than men on average, as they are more likely to take breaks to start a family or care for sick relatives, or both. Statistics Canada reported that in 2017, women were twice as likely as men to work part time (26% vs. 13%). Given that most people set savings aside during their working years, gaps out of the workforce make it hard for women to keep pace when it comes to accumulating savings. Planning for retirement should look different for women and men given the different life cycles. If women follow the same retirement plan as men, they will fall short in retirement. Retirement system providers should target women differently, give women confidence to handle their finances and consider different, perhaps riskier, investment strategies. Employers should review their benefits systems through a gender lens, to ensure options and communications meet the needs of both sexes.

BPW International Resolution #3: Public Procurement for Women Owned Businesses

BPW International Resolves to promote Public Procurement as a Tool to Boost Women's Economic Empowerment and that BPW Affiliates:

- 1) Promote gender equality as "smart economics," and advocate that public procurement be used as a tool to achieve socioeconomic objectives through the government's regulatory and buying powers;
- 2) Facilitate access to information regarding public procurement, promote women's participation in public procurement through policy recommendations
- 3) Advocate that Governments redefine gender-responsive procurement policies and implement creative strategies that focus on women's workforce participation

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, and the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion and Small Business and Economic Development to utilize gender responsive procurement policies and strategies to increase women's economic empowerment and put a focus on women's workforce participation.

Rationale

Worldwide, compared to their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs face disproportionately complex, and interconnected barriers to accessing equal economic opportunities. These range from legal and regulatory hurdles to sociocultural norms and gender biases and lack of skills, networks, and finance. For instance, women own or manage only one in five exporting firms even though they own an estimated 38% of all small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Women spend at least twice as much time on domestic and care work as men, which means the time they could spend on remunerated opportunities is reduced.

Studies show that women-owned businesses that are able to successfully obtain government contracts usually grow, and in return, contribute to increased GDP growth and an improved female labour force participation rate.

UN Women endorses gender-responsive procurement as a critical part of the solution for gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender-responsive procurement is the selection of services, goods and civil works that considers their impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Procurement, supplier diversity and inclusion can thus be used as a powerful tool to economically empower women and to combat poverty by increasing the income of women and ensure sustainable social and economic benefits.

BPW International Resolution #4: Gender Equality in Sport

BPW International Resolves that all Affiliates: urge their governments to recognise the role of gender inequality in sports,

1) such as with representation, leadership, the pay gap and media coverage;

2) and lead a public-private-NGO approach to address it through initiatives including but not limited to: a) asking Government and sporting associations to research and provide statistics on the extent and impact of gender inequality in sports, b) raising awareness of the value that sports has in developing girls and boys into resilient leaders, c) questioning the structure and role of the media in sports from a gender perspective.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Quebec Lieutenant, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to recognize and measure gender inequality in leadership representation, pay and media coverage in sports, and to develop strategies to promote gender equality.

Rationale

The fight for gender equality is an ongoing battle despite the tremendous progress made in the past few decades. The world's finest female athletes lag behind their male counterparts in terms of earnings. Indeed, there is as much a gender pay gap in sports as there is in corporate America, and the discrepancy is glaring and unfair. Several factors contribute to this gender pay gap in sports. These include sexism, mismatched media coverage, and most disconcerting, the lack of women holding governing positions in sports organizations. With no significant change being made to ensure equality in pay and representation, female athletes will remain on the short end of the pay scale for the foreseeable future.

BPW International Resolution #5: Skills Development for Migrant Women and Recognition of their Foreign Credentials

BPW International Resolves that all Affiliates: a) urge their governments to invest in skills development for migrant women b) facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies for migrant women by reviewing education and credential assessments for immigration applicants and advocating for means to prove their contributions in the host country c) advocate and collaborate with immigrant serving organizations to recognize businesses and educational institutions that promote inclusion of migrant women in the workplace.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to (a) invest in skills development for migrant women, (b) facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies for migrant women by reviewing education and credential assessments for immigration applicants and advocating for means to prove their contributions, (c) advocate and collaborate with immigrant serving organizations to recognize businesses and educational institutions that promote inclusion of migrant women in the workplace.

Rationale

Studies have shown that an increasing proportion of women are economic or labour migrants. Not only do women spend their incomes in the host countries but they also send remittances to their home countries which go towards education, health and community development. In fact, studies show that migrant women remit a higher proportion of their salary than migrant men.

A key economic and employment barrier faced by migrants is a lack of recognition of international credentials and experience. Businesses are feeling the effects of labour shortages around the world and the urgency to find solutions has become a top priority. However, there is a lack of understanding of the skills and credentials of internationally trained professionals and work is needed to change this.

BPW International Resolution #6: Access for Rural Women to Technology

BPW International Resolves that all Affiliates urge their governments to: (1) urge their governments to increase access to internet technology in rural, remote and Indigenous communities; (2) introduce an initiative that will support community access to technology in a sustainable way.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Minister of Rural Economic Development, the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, the Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth to increase internet technology in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Rationale

Technology can be key to empowering rural women. While the digital revolution is reaching rural areas in many developing countries, the rural digital divide continues to present considerable challenges. The problem is even more acute for women, who face a triple divide: digital, rural, and gender.

Rural women usually have less access than men to information and new technologies. Consequently, they are at a disadvantage in making informed choices about what to produce. Lack of information also limits women's influence in their communities and their ability to participate in decision making. When assessing the opportunities and risks of new technologies, it is essential to give attention to gender differences and to ensuring that women's voice is heard so that technological developments can be exploited in the way that best prevents them from increasing inequalities.

BPW International Resolution #7: Development of National Biodiversity Strategies

BPW International Resolves that all affiliates urge their governments to commit with urgency to stem the loss of biodiversity by:

- 1) developing a comprehensive, nationally coordinated environmental monitoring system
- 2) developing a mandated strategy to
 - prioritise and incrementally fill data gaps.
 - prioritise protection of critically endangered ecosystems, species and genetic resources
 - report on progress annually to the populous with data, targets and information to ensure knowledge on their current situation and future plans is widely disseminated
 - promote sustainable use of their resources
- 3) allocating financial and other resources to Government Departments and other agencies to affect these recommendations.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Canada) urges to the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and the Minister of Natural Resources to develop a comprehensive, nationally coordinated environmental monitoring system and strategy to stem the loss of biodiversity.

Rationale

Women need to be equally and actively involved in processes to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity because they play critical roles as primary land managers and resource users, and they face disproportionate impacts both from biodiversity loss and gender-blind conservation measures. Biodiversity loss also poses a disproportionate burden for women and girls by increasing the time required to obtain necessary resources such as water, fuel wood, and medicinal plants, which reduces the time they can spend on income generating activities and education.

At least 40 percent of the world's economy and 80 percent of the needs of the poor are derived from biological resources. Altogether, the food, commercial forestry and ecotourism industries could lose US\$ 338 billion per year if the loss of biodiversity continues at its current pace. Meanwhile The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative estimates that global sustainable business opportunities from investing in natural resources could be worth US\$ 2 to 6 trillion by 2050. Millions of people also depend on nature and species for their day-to-day livelihoods.

BPW International Resolution #8: Provision of Alternatives to Detention for Women and Girls

BPW International Resolves that all affiliates urge their governments to implement the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders and provide alternatives to detention for female offenders with a key focus of reducing the high number of indigenous women and girl detainees sentenced for minor crimes.

BPW Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women urges the Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and the Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario to implement the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders and provide alternatives to detention for female offenders with a key focus on reducing the number of indigenous women and girl detainees sentenced for minor crimes.

Rationale

Treating women offenders in the same way as men will not achieve gender equality. The circumstances in which women commit criminal offences are different from men. The facts:

- A considerable proportion of women offenders are in prison as a direct or indirect result of multiple layers of discrimination and deprivation;
- Women mainly commit petty crimes closely linked to poverty, such as theft, fraud and minor drug related offences;
- Only a small minority of women are convicted of violent offences, and a large majority of them have been victims of violence themselves.

Because women and girls represent less than a tenth of the prison population their characteristics and needs have remained unacknowledged and largely unmet by criminal justice systems. Prisons and their regimes – from the architecture and security procedures to healthcare, family contact and training opportunities are usually designed for men.

There are a number of non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment. At the pre-trial stage, alternatives include bail, seizure of travel documents, periodic reporting to the police, electronic monitoring and curfew. For those found guilty, courts can impart fines, community service orders or restorative justice.