

**FULL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: “AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP: CANADA AND THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA”**

INTRODUCTION

The Government is committed to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as the protection of their human rights around the world. The Government therefore welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Third Report of the House of Commons’ Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Committee) entitled "An Opportunity for Global Leadership: Canada and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda". The Government followed with great interest the open proceedings of the Committee hearings on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) this past spring.

The report is very timely from the Government’s point of view. The recommendations are complementary to related processes being undertaken by the Government. For example, the Government undertook a review of Canada’s international assistance, which included strong elements of gender equality and women’s empowerment. In August 2016, the Government announced its peace operations strategy, which includes the role of women and youth as an important element.

In preparing the response to the Committee’s recommendations, the Government has taken the liberty of grouping the recommendations in order to allow a comprehensive response that acknowledges the inter-connectedness across the range of recommendations in each group.

- Group A: Recommendations for the promotion of the WPS agenda that are internal to the Government;
- Group B: Recommendations for actions within the United Nations (UN); and,
- Group C: Recommendations pertaining to fragile and conflict-affected states.

Group A: Recommendations for the promotion of the WPS agenda that are internal to the Government

Response

Recommendation 1. The Government of Canada should make women, peace and security a priority of its foreign policy agenda.

Recommendation 15. The Government of Canada should engage in comprehensive consultations with parliamentarians and civil society organizations to develop a new, ambitious and well-resourced national action plan on women, peace and security.

The Government considers WPS a foreign policy priority. The Government coordinates its efforts related to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as the protection of their human rights, in fragile and conflict-affected states through Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (C-NAP).

C-NAP is a partnership among the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of International Development, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety and for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). C-NAP has served the Government well in providing a focus across the partner departments for implementing the WPS agenda. Since the launch of C-NAP in 2010, the Government has tabled in Parliament four annual implementation progress reports and the fifth report is in preparation.

C-NAP sunset in March 2016 and the Government announced on 8 March 2016 that C-NAP will be renewed. The Government is eager to engage on WPS matters and notes that the C-NAP renewal process will take into account the recommendations made in the Committee's report, as well as the results of the International Assistance Review (IAR), which held extensive consultations with civil society. Furthermore, as called for in C-NAP, the Government holds regular and formal consultations with the members of the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada, as well as other groups and experts in Canada, the UN, and the likeminded and conflict-affected countries. The Government also provides briefings on WPS activities to Parliamentarians upon request. The C-NAP renewal will be further informed by additional civil society consultations. The Government's actions in support of the WPS agenda are continuing unabated through the renewal process.

Recommendation 16. Each Canadian government department and agency with responsibilities under the action plan on women, peace and security should identify a high-level champion who would be responsible for developing and overseeing a directive that would be specific to that department or agency's role in the implementation of the action plan, and which would, among other requirements, identify needed financial and human resources, as well as time-bound objectives.

There are senior officials within each partner department who currently direct C-NAP implementation. Within GAC, it is the Assistant Deputy Minister for International Security and Political Director who is responsible for delivering on the implementation of C-NAP, which is exercised through the Director General for the Peace Operations and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOPs). The Director General is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of C-NAP including identifying objectives and the necessary human and financial resources. The Director General is also designated as Canada's National Focal Point for WPS implementation.

Within the RCMP, the Deputy Commissioner of Federal Policing is responsible for delivering on the implementation of the C-NAP as it relates to international policing

activities, which is exercised through the Director General of Federal and International Special Services. The Director General will continue to oversee and champion the RCMP's contribution and advancement of the WPS agenda.

Canada has been at the forefront of the integration of women in the military well before the United Nations Security Council adopted its first resolution on WPS. Recognizing the importance of continuing to implement the WPS agenda as a top priority for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the Chief of the Defence Staff issued a *Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions* (the CDS Directive) on January 29, 2016. The CDS Directive outlines a framework to ensure that the military fully integrates the requirements of C-NAP, as well as the Government of Canada direction on Gender Based Analysis Plus, into planning and operations by August 31, 2017, and into the wider military institution by March 31, 2019. To support this goal, the CDS Directive includes systematic steps to ensure that Gender Based Analysis Plus and WPS considerations are incorporated as a routine and common element of all military operations, activities, policies, education, professional development, and programs.

Among other initiatives, the CDS Directive calls for the establishment of Gender Advisor positions to the Chief of the Defence Staff and to operational commanders. The military currently has three Gender Advisor positions that provide strategic and operational oversight in a headquarters setting. These Gender Advisors are mandated with developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on gender perspectives and Gender Based Analysis Plus across the military and advise senior officers regarding gender perspectives. In future, a Gender Advisor will be deployed with all military operations. The Gender Advisors will also monitor, coordinate with, and support Gender Focal Points, currently being established, who will operate throughout the military.

The Deputy Minister of National Defence and the Chief of the Defence Staff appointed in May 2016 a Gender Based Analysis Plus Champion at the General Officer level. This Champion serves as the direct, personal advisor to them on the integration of Gender Based Analysis Plus into military activities and assesses the impact of policies, operations, programs, services, and other initiatives on women and men, amongst other identifying factors. At the same time, as the military's spokesperson for gender issues, the Champion advocates for and oversees the implementation of the CDS Directive within the military, while also playing an important role in promoting the WPS agenda with various international partners.

At the same time, and in addition, National Defence continues to have a Champion for Women in Defence, also at the level of General Officer, to support issues related to the employment of women, including implementing the goal of increasing the number of women within the military by 1% per year until reaching a target of 25%. This is further supported by a network of advisory organizations across Canada.

As the Government works to renew C-NAP over the winter of 2016-17, we will explore dedicated programming, and examine specific areas where improvements can be made, including ensuring that C-NAP will be a high-level policy directive, with time-bound targets and resources allocated for its implementation.

Recommendation 17. The Government of Canada should provide a report to Parliament by 1 March of each year on the implementation of its action plan on women, peace and security, which must include detailed information on the financial resources it has allocated to all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda, and an evaluation of the outcomes and broader impact of those initiatives.

The Government is committed to provide regular reporting to Parliament. The annual progress reports provide a narrative description of the Government's diplomatic, development, military, and police actions to promote the human rights of women and girls and strengthen the role of women in peace and security. The report also contains a tabular section that details the specific actions and indicators. The Government agrees with the recommendation in that the progress reports should provide information on the financial resources allocated to WPS, as well as to evaluate outcomes and impacts of the WPS initiatives. The progress report 2014-2015 includes a listing of WPS-related projects with financial details and links to the main pillars of the C-NAP. The Government will ensure that the renewed C-NAP is supported by a robust evaluation framework. To give a full and timely picture of the Government's progress in implementing the plan, the Government will aim to table the annual report as soon as possible following the end of the fiscal year on 31 March, and likely during the fall session.

Recommendation 2. The Government of Canada should increase the number of women it puts forward and supports as nominees for senior UN positions, up to and including the post of United Nations Secretary-General.

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation to increase the number of women it nominates for senior UN positions. As part of Canada's re-engagement in peace operations, the Government will nominate female candidates to senior UN positions.

The Government recently deployed senior female police officers to senior positions in Haiti, Ukraine and throughout the UN in New York, including the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the UN Police Gender Unit, as well as the Senior Police Adviser position at Canada's Permanent Representative Mission to the UN in New York. In 2015, Canada also deployed its first-ever Canadian female military Contingent Commander for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

The Government supports the UN's target to raise the number of female police officers serving in peacekeeping operations to 20%, and has undertaken steps to increase

Canadian female police participation. For instance, the RCMP, as the coordinator for the partnership of Canadian police services for international police missions, in 2015 deployed 27% women officers to operations abroad, and has added a line to all job bulletins specifically encouraging women to apply. The Canadian police were the first to reach the UN goal and they strive to increase the percentage of deployed Canadian female police officers to continue to meet or exceed the 20% target.

Presently, the RCMP is finalizing a nation-wide survey of Canadian female police officers to determine what, if any, barriers and challenges exist that limit their access or desire to participate in international peace operations. The survey results will better inform and support the RCMP's future efforts to increase female participation in UN and other missions.

The Government will continue to review UN requirements for filling senior UN positions and to nominate women who are well qualified for senior UN positions when appropriate, and where capacity exists. This will allow Canada to demonstrate leadership in reinforcing the importance of gender equality on operations and by ensuring women are adequately represented in leadership roles.

Recommendation 6. The Government of Canada should ensure that extensive training on women, peace and security is provided to Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Global Affairs Canada personnel prior to and during deployments to international peace support operations.

The Government welcomes the recommendation to provide extensive WPS training to Government personnel prior to and during deployments. The Government is committed to raising awareness of the WPS agenda in all of its training related to peace and security in fragile and conflict-affected states.

As Canada works to increase its deployment footprint in fragile states over the coming years, including through deployments to multilateral and regional organizations the Government will work to strengthen its current practice of requiring deployed personnel to complete gender-awareness training and ensure that all personnel are familiar with Canada's commitments under the new C-NAP. For instance, the Government is currently working to develop new training modules on WPS and gender to enhance the pre-deployment suite of training provided to the civilian personnel deployed to peace operations.

The Government has invested in developing and delivering comprehensive pre-deployment WPS training to all Canadian police deployment candidates. The training includes modules on various topics, including WPS (e.g., the differential impact of conflict on women and girls, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.), as well as preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers themselves. The Government is continuously seeking to improve the WPS training provided to police officers. For example, the RCMP recently worked with the Women,

Peace and Security Network - Canada to develop and implement a WPS workshop for Canadian police officers deploying to Haiti. The workshop covered various topics, including gender and the WPS normative framework, as well as related legal frameworks and practical exercises. This training partnership represents a concrete step in building an effective, ongoing relationship between the RCMP and Canadian civil society.

The Government also ensures that all military personnel receive pre-deployment training in human rights, cultural awareness, and gender awareness, with emphasis on the special considerations and vulnerabilities of women, girls and children in conflict areas. The CDS Directive calls for more robust education and training requirements in these areas. More specifically, it outlines that the military will develop a CAF-specific Gender Based Analysis Plus framework and guide, and related training tools, as required. The military will also assess and further build on professional military education and training programs for their personnel to enhance their understanding of the WPS agenda and Gender-Based Analysis Plus. This work will contribute to the integration of these considerations as a routine and common element of all operations, activities, policies, education, professional development, and programs. Ultimately, as promulgated in the CDS Directive, Gender Advisors will be deployed on all military operations to support the integration of gender issues in theatre. In the interim, all deployed military personnel can seek guidance as needed from Gender Advisors at National Defence Headquarters on gender issues.

In the interim, personnel who are identified to serve as Gender Advisors to support Commanders in integrating gender perspectives into planning and operations have completed training offered through North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations in Sweden, and Gender-Based Analysis Plus training through Status of Women Canada in order to provide an in-depth understanding of gender-based issues.

Within the context of the C-NAP renewal, the Government will review the situation with respect to the provision of in-mission WPS training to all civilian, military and police personnel, taking into consideration the training responsibilities of the UN and other organization to which Canadian personnel are assigned, as well as training needs based on the length of deployments.

Recommendation 14. The Government of Canada should consider allocating at least 15% of the international assistance it provides for peace and security programming to projects that have gender equality and women's empowerment as their primary objective.

The recommendation for the Government to consider allocating at least 15% of Canada's international assistance towards peace and security programming to projects that have gender equality as their primary objective is in line with what the Government has heard throughout the IAR. The Government will consider the implications of this

allocation. The Government would like to emphasize that as part of our efforts to refocus our international assistance on the poorest and most vulnerable, including in fragile states, we will adapt our ways of working to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls and the protection and promotion of their rights continues to be at the heart of Canada's international assistance.

Group B: Recommendations for actions within the UN

Response

Recommendation 3. The Government of Canada should work within the United Nations and with troop- and police-contributing countries to develop a concrete and time-bound strategy that would lead to substantial increases in the number of women deployed to UN peace support operations.

The Government continues to advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women within the UN system in an effort to increase the number of women deployed to UN peace support operations. In New York, the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations chairs the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and regularly delivers statements on WPS and the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and co-sponsors WPS-related resolutions and activities in UN entities including the Security Council. Canada has appointed a National Focal Point for WPS and co-sponsored the launch of this new network at the General Assembly in September. Canada chairs the Working Group of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which considers WPS issues in the peace operations context. Canada leverages its positions in all of the above-mentioned groups to encourage the UN and its Member States to take concrete steps to increase the number of women within UN entities and peace operations.

Canada also supports specific training with the objective of promoting women's deployment into peace support operations, such as through the UN Police All-Female pre-Assessment for Mission Service Selection Assistance and Assessment Team. This team's objective is to increase the ratio of female police officers to UN field operations in order to reach the UN's targeted goal of 20 % female participation, a goal which Canada has already met. Since 2014, Canadian deployed police officers have been involved in training nearly 600 female candidates in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Rwanda. Upcoming training components related to Canada's re-engagement in UN peace operations also emphasize the participation of women, in addition to ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated into training for both men and women.

Canada will continue its efforts through the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, the Working Group of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations

and other venues to promote women's participation and to identify partners in promoting the WPS agenda.

Recommendation 4. Within the United Nations, the Government of Canada should insist on full adherence to the UN Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse as a condition for all countries contributing troops and police to UN peace support operations, and insist on full transparency and regular reporting in relation to all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as robust accountability measures, including prosecution.

Recommendation 5. The Government of Canada should work with the United Nations in order to improve the pre-deployment and in-mission training provided to UN peacekeepers on women, peace and security, as well as the prevention and investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Government fully supports the recommendations that it should work with the UN to insist on the full adherence to the UN "zero-tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers, and on rigorous accountability measures by contributing countries, and work with the UN to improve training for peacekeepers on WPS and the prevention of SEA.

Canada takes all allegations of SEA seriously and adopted a 'zero-tolerance policy' on SEA for its police and military personnel abroad, and works with the UN to strengthen efforts to prevent and combat SEA, including by improving assistance to survivors.

Canada is a strong advocate for the full implementation of the UN's zero-tolerance policy on SEA, and has urged troop and police contributing countries, as well as UN agencies, to uphold their obligations to investigate allegations and to provide regular, transparent reporting to the UN. Canada has also supported the UN's policy of publicly listing the nationality of uniformed personnel against whom credible allegations of SEA exist, which Canada considers an important accountability measure. Canada also calls for military contingents to deploy National Investigation Officers to examine alleged cases of SEA within their national contingents

Pre-deployment training is primarily the responsibility of each troop or police contributing country. Thus, as part of our peace operations re-engagement, the Government will continue to examine measures that would further strengthen Canadian SEA policies and practices. These will include, but are not limited to, practical actions in the areas of enhancing training and prevention measures, strengthening accountability and improving survivor support. Canada will also consider new training initiatives for troop and police contributing countries, in coordination with the UN, including on WPS and SEA, as well as examine ways to strengthen the UN's response to SEA. We have

already deployed a military legal officer to support the new UN Special Coordinator on improving the UN's comprehensive response to SEA.

The Government will continue to sustain pressure on the UN system to implement SEA reforms, for example, in the *Secretary General's Report on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* and other Reviews through our chairing of the Group of Friends on WPS, the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict and through the Working Group of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Recommendation 12. The Government of Canada should consider contributing to the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

The Government welcomes the establishment of the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI) and recognizes it as a valuable mechanism to enhance women's engagement in peace and security and humanitarian action. The GAI's objective aligns with Canada's existing international assistance priority to integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in all of its policy and programming. The Government is exploring opportunities to contribute financially to the GAI to advance the gender equality and women's empowerment.

Group C: Recommendations pertaining to fragile and conflict-affected states

Response

Recommendation 7. As part of the humanitarian and development assistance it provides in countries affected by and recovering from conflict, the Government of Canada should include in its programming the necessary short and long-term resources towards services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and economic reintegration.

Recommendation 8. The Government of Canada should work to significantly strengthen the rule of law and justice systems in conflict-affected and fragile states, including by providing appropriate support through multilateral and grassroots mechanisms for programs that seek to improve access to justice for women and to enhance national capacity to prosecute those responsible for sexual and gender-based violence.

The Government agrees with the recommendations and recognizes that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a barrier to peace and development. Canada is supporting a number of international assistance and humanitarian projects that work to prevent and respond to SGBV, including by working to improve access to justice for women and strengthen accountability mechanisms. We work to strengthen legal and

justice systems through establishing laws that prohibit violence, enhancing access to legal services for survivors and supporting the identification, prosecution and rehabilitation of perpetrators.

For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Canada supports an initiative implemented by United Nations Development Programme that works to reduce sexual violence by fighting to end impunity and by promoting measures to prevent these crimes. In addition, through the regional project “Combating Violence Against Girls and Young Women in the Great Lakes Region – II”, Canada is partnering with the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation to work with a network of local women’s collectives in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to combat violence towards girls and young women in the region.

In Guatemala, we contributed to legal representation for strategic human rights litigation in the fight against impunity for violence against women, including support for the landmark case of Sepur Zarco, which resulted in the conviction of two former military officers on crimes against humanity in the form of sexual and domestic slavery of 15 Indigenous women. We also provided support to the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala to integrate gender equality training for its staff and investigative teams of men and women within the Commission to carry out gender-based analysis. Furthermore, Canada is providing \$3.3 million to support the Commission for International Justice and Accountability’s efforts to investigate violations of International Criminal and Humanitarian Law in Iraq and Syria, including SGBV committed by Da’esh against Yazidi women and girls. This is in addition to \$1.6 million provided last fiscal year.

Since 2014, Canada has provided support to the International Committee of the Red Cross Special Appeal on Strengthening the Response to Sexual Violence, with a contribution of \$11 million. Through this initiative, the International Committee of the Red Cross is working to improve the humanitarian response to survivors of sexual violence, as well as to prevent such violations from occurring. Activities include health services and psychosocial care for survivors, as well as activities promoting economic security for vulnerable populations including survivors of sexual violence. The Government is also supporting the UN Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, with a \$3M grant over 3 years (2015-18). Ms. Bangura is active in strengthening the capacity of national institutions to ensure accountability for conflict-related sexual violence by providing ongoing technical assistance and support to local governance structures.

As part of Canada’s commitments as a member of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, the Government announced that Canada will provide dedicated multi-year funding for gender-based violence prevention and response in humanitarian contexts from 2017-20. This funding will help bridge the gaps between humanitarian and development interventions by enabling humanitarian partners to provide sustainable support and services to meet the specific needs of SGBV.

The Government also deploys public servants to various national, regional, and international organizations to provide expertise that can support the WPS agenda in a number of ways. For example, Canada has long supported Justice Rapid Response (JRR), an organization which provides the international community with a global roster of time-sensitive, specially trained investigative expertise. JRR has played a critical role in building the capacity of the international community, as well as individual states, to investigate and prosecute those responsible for SGBV, and thereby improve access to justice for women and other survivors of SGBV. Likewise, Canada's deployment of expertise to the Strategic Communications Working Group of the Anti-ISIL Coalition has contributed to an "innovation hub" pilot project in Syria to support young women entrepreneurs, and extend psychosocial support to survivors of SGBV.

As Canada increases the number of deployments as part of the new re-engagement strategy, we will examine how we can contribute to improving the capacity of local authorities to maintain law and order while respecting human rights and provide support to the local transitional justice mechanisms. These efforts will also aim to improve access to justice for women and enhance national capacity to prosecute those responsible for SGBV.

Recommendation 9. The Government of Canada should support training programs that equip women in conflict-affected and fragile states with the skills, capacity, experience and networks necessary to play meaningful roles in peace and security processes and institutions.

Recommendation 10. The Government of Canada should vigorously use all of the diplomatic and financial tools – bilateral and multilateral – at its disposal to encourage the inclusion of women in a meaningful way in mediation initiatives, ceasefire and peace negotiations, and donor conferences, as well as in all aspects of post-conflict planning and decision-making.

Recommendation 13. The Government of Canada should provide development assistance on a multi-year basis and for core operations to civil society organizations – including at the grassroots level – that are working to implement the women, peace and security agenda in conflict-affected and fragile states.

The Government provides training to women to equip them with the necessary skills to become active in peace and security processes and institutions. Through our development and stabilization efforts, we work with experienced partners to promote the role of women as agents of peace, support their human rights, including by preventing and addressing sexual violence and harmful practices and strengthening the capacity of women to participate in peace-building and political processes. "To further this commitment, the Government has announced that it will convene a high level conference on WPS in 2017."

Through Development and Peace (2012-17, \$14.5M), Canada is supporting work advocating for the active and meaningful participation and representation of women and local women's group in peace and security activities, including peace processes, and strengthening efforts to prevent violence, including sexual violence, in countries such as Haiti, Afghanistan, Colombia and the DRC. In Afghanistan, in partnership with the National Democratic Institute, Canada supports the meaningful participation of women in Afghan political life. The project, which runs from 2014-17 (\$5.7M), aims to support newly elected female provincial council members and parliamentarians to fulfill their mandates; and increase public awareness and dialogue about women's inclusion in politics through radio (and other media) to reach women in rural and remote areas of Afghanistan.

In Syria, through the Public International Law and Policy Group, the Government is looking to support the provision of expert legal advice to the Syrian High Negotiations Committee (HNC) including support to all three women on the opposition negotiating team and the HNC Women's Consultative Committee. This support will ensure that the Syrian Opposition delegation has an enhanced ability to effectively present and respond to negotiation proposals during the UN-led peace process, with the ultimate goal of increasing the likelihood of success of a final peace agreement.

As Canada works to increase the number of overall deployments, with a focus on contributing expertise and resources to the UN and other multilateral efforts in fragile and conflict affected states, the Committee's recommendations will serve as an important guide as the terms of reference and objectives for positions are being developed. Direct support to on-going peace processes will be one of the focus areas for upcoming deployments. The Government will work to ensure that these deployments support the meaningful participation of women in mediation, ceasefires and peace negotiations whenever possible.

The Government considers civil society organizations at the local grassroots level important partners and stakeholders for advancing the rights of women and girls in conflict-affected settings, as well as for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 - To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and Goal 16 - To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. These organizations play a critical role in advocating for change in social norms, raising awareness around gender-based discrimination, identifying emerging challenges, and holding governments accountable for addressing human rights violations for women and girls. Thus the Government is reengaging with civil society and will work closely with civil society organizations including through the C-NAP renewal process

Recommendation 11. The Government of Canada should significantly increase the diplomatic, financial and material support it provides to human rights defenders as part

of its approach to women, peace and security, and advocate on the world stage for other countries to take similar actions, including by calling within the United Nations for the adoption of special protection measures.

The Government recognizes the critical work of human rights defenders and supports the recommendation to increase the diplomatic, financial and material support provided to them.

Human rights defenders play an important role at the local, regional and international levels. Canada has a continuing interest in supporting the work of individuals and organizations whose efforts advances respect for human rights in difficult situations. It was in part for this purpose that the Government created the new office for Human Rights, Freedom and Inclusion (OHRFI) with a budget of up to \$15 million to promote human rights around the world. OHRFI will work closely with Canadian and international civil society, religious groups, academia and non-governmental organizations to allow Canada to leverage its pluralistic experience as a multicultural and multi-faith country. The Government has also prepared guidelines to support officials at Canada's missions and at Headquarters to advance the work of human rights defenders around the world.

Canada provides support for human rights defenders by enhancing the visibility of their work. In his remarks to the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in March 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs noted that harassment of human rights defenders is one of the key emerging human rights challenges. On September 23, 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced \$1.5 million for the Lifeline Project, which helps protect human rights defenders when they are threatened. Canada supports and co-sponsors resolutions pertaining to human rights defenders at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

Canada also strongly supports the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders to study conditions for and efforts to support human rights defenders while calling attention to the challenges they face. Canada also recognizes the important work of human rights defenders, for example through the John Diefenbaker Defender of Human Rights and Freedom Award, provided since 2011 to those who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in defending human rights and freedom internationally, especially in the face of repression.

Support for women's rights defenders in countries such as Colombia, Guatemala and Syria was a clear recommendation made through the public consultations in the IAR. The Government will consider how this recommendation can be reflected in the renewed C-NAP which will be informed by the findings of the IAR.