

Statement by the Canadian Labour Congress
Item 4, General Segment NGOs of the Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting
Presented by Vicky Smallman, National Director, Human Rights

I'm speaking today on behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress, Canada's largest labour organization, as well as the Canadian Beijing +30 Network, a coalition of over 70 organizations committed to monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Canada.

Our parallel report, *Missed Opportunities*, takes note of many accomplishments in the last 5 years, including the commitment of \$30 billion over five years to build a universal, publicly funded child care system, the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and the first Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, the ratification of ILO Convention 190 and framework legislation to establish universal pharmacare, starting with free contraception and diabetes treatments.

Yet significant gaps persist—from the neglect of women with disabilities and challenges facing migrant workers to the prevalence of online hatred and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Indigenous women and girls continue to experience disproportionate discrimination and violence. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls remains a crisis, and it is through this genocide that many dimensions of violence, injustice and colonial destruction intersect. Despite the government's Action Plan, only two of the 231 MMIWG National Inquiry Calls to Justice have been fully implemented.

These challenges are compounded by the cost-of-living crisis placing great stress on low-income households, especially those led by women. The proportion of women reporting financial difficulty increased by more than 30 per cent between 2021 and 2023 - by almost 80 per cent among racialized women.

Access to health and other care services remains a pressing concern as care systems have been strained by years of austerity. Workforce crises persist in all sectors of the care economy, exacerbating decent work deficits and gaps in access for people who depend on care. Women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care remains a significant barrier to labour force participation and economic security.

All levels of government in Canada must step up efforts. Investment in decent, sustainable jobs, affordable housing, public services and infrastructure must be a priority.

Real change can only be achieved by engaging with and promoting the leadership of women's rights and gender equality organizations, supporting their capacity to engage as equal partners through flexible and sustained funding.

This gathering comes against a backdrop of rising populism and attacks on gender and human rights. Canada is not immune; this rising tide can be seen in provincial

legislation targeting Muslim women's freedom of expression and autonomy, and policies that undermine the rights of trans and gender diverse children. We are working hard to hold the line but also to keep our focus on the future.

Together, let us harness the moment of Beijing +30 to reconnect, regenerate commitment, charge up political will and mobilize the public for a more sustainable, resilient and gender-just future – a future that leaves no one behind.