

# CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

## CCIC ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

### CONTEXT

CCIC is a coalition of Canadian voluntary organizations committed to promoting and strengthening the role of civil society in efforts to promote peace, defend human rights and to end global poverty and injustice. As confirmation of their mutual commitment, the Coalition accepts and promotes the basic principles found in the Code of Ethics including that development should “foster and promote the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms” and “should reflect the concerns, perspectives, and experience of women...”. Within this vision, the realization of women’s rights and equality is both goal in and of itself and crucial for the achievement of other development objectives.

Over the past forty years, CCIC has worked in various ways to realize women’s rights and support greater equality: through policy analysis, networking, tools development, analysis of members’ capacities and profiling this issue. Women’s rights and equality is the first point in CCIC’s 10-Point Agenda: “Accelerate action on Canada’s international commitments to women’s equality by promoting and investing in women’s social, political, economic and cultural rights. Canada’s actions must include significant support for women’s organizations, as well as explicit attention to gender inequalities across all international initiatives in diplomacy, aid, trade and defence.” As well, all other nine points in the Agenda take up issues related to women’s rights.

Internationally, there has been an evolution of concepts, approaches and practices. Women’s organizations and feminist activists continue to articulate a positive vision for the future, push for change, hold governments accountable for their international commitments, and build capacities of civil society to work towards equality and justice. They have worked to build an independent women’s movement and to bring gender equality issues to discussions of trade, debt, the environment and peace.

Despite these efforts, the Council acknowledges that equality between women and men is still to be achieved in Canada as much as elsewhere.

CCIC recognizes that gender inequalities are complex and multifaceted – work on this issue is political and requires the examination on many different levels (personal, political, programmatic, etc.). An organization’s approach to women’s rights and gender equality must include attention to issues of diversity and power.

## **GOAL**

CCIC is committed to gender equality and women's rights and strives in our goals, our analysis, and how we work to be consistent with this commitment. CCIC seeks to contribute to global efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality by taking action within our own organizations and through collaboration with CSOs and activists from around the world.

### **Objectives**

1. CCIC will work to ensure that its governance, programming and organizational practices are explicit about issues related to women's rights and gender equality.
2. As part of our commitment to being a learning organization, CCIC will reflect and report on progress of its work on women's rights and gender equality.

### **Scope**

The responsibility to advance women's rights and gender equality is the responsibility of all: women and men. This policy applies to all members of the Board of Directors and all staff of CCIC. It also applies to volunteers as determined by their involvement in the following areas.

## **POLICY APPLICATION / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **a) Governance**

**Objective:** CCIC will ensure that its governance structures facilitate and reflect its commitment to women's rights and gender equality.

#### **Strategies to support this objective include:**

- Aim to ensure gender balance in Board membership including the choice of the Chair person.
- Remove or reduce systematic barriers, which prevent and discourage the participation of women.
- Encourage a governance culture, which honours and includes the diversity of women's voices and ways of participating as well as men's.
- Ensure that decision-making processes reflect a range of styles that are suited to the issue at hand and to the diversity of perspectives and styles of women as well as men Board members.
- Promote awareness of the gender equality dimensions of Board discussions and decisions.

**b) Programming**

**Objectives:** CCIC will ensure that this policy goal informs its programs by strengthening its internal capacities to carry out gender analysis, and to plan, track and evaluate its programs in relation to women’s rights and gender equality.

**Strategies to support this objective include:**

- Strengthen policy analysis to incorporate ongoing and explicit attention to women’s rights and gender perspectives.
- Contribute to discussions of what constitutes “gender-sensitive analysis.”
- Network with women’s and women’s equality-seeking organizations (Canadian and international).
- Support organizational practices that are consistent with women’s rights and contribute to greater equality between women and men.
- Develop tools to support staff in carrying out these strategies.

**c) Organizational Practices**

**Objective:** CCIC will ensure the goal of this policy is reflected in a supportive work culture through policies and practices related to organizational decision-making, staffing and human resources management.

**Strategies to support this objective include:**

- Work toward an organizational environment and decision-making processes, which includes and values both women’s and men’s perspectives, voices and priorities.
- Ensure that staffing/human resources management decisions related to hiring, transfers and promotions are grounded in a concern for balancing gender inequalities.
- Ensure that CCIC’s policies and practices are responsive to and reflect CCIC’s priority to promote a healthy work/life balance and family-friendly work environment.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The following responsibilities and reporting requirements apply to this policy:

- All staff have a responsibility to work towards the realization of the goal and objectives outlined in this policy;
- The Board and President-CEO are ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Board should review the policy every 5 years, or when there are significant changes in the organization.

- ❑ The Board Chair is responsible to ensure a climate conducive to upholding this policy during Board meetings and as part of overall governance.
- ❑ As per CCIC's planning and evaluation cycle, an Action Plan will be developed and evaluated in terms of specific actions, responsibilities, resources and timeframe related to the accomplishment of this policy goal.
- ❑ A component of the President-CEO's report to the Board in May will address progress towards results in the previous year on CCIC's women's rights and gender equality work (achievements, gaps, challenges and lessons learned).
- ❑ CCIC's Annual Report will address CCIC's work and accomplishments results related to women's rights and gender equality.

**Approved by the CCIC Board of Directors,  
March 12-13, 1999**

**Revised and approved by the CCIC Board of Directors,  
September 26-27, 2008**

**Revised and approved by the CCIC Board of Directors  
March 6-7, 2009**

## APPENDIX DEFINITIONS

There is significant discussion around what words and concepts mean. CCIC members use different terms and we must work with this diversity.

For the purposes of this policy, key terms include:

**Women’s Rights:** *Women’s rights* refer to the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, which are enshrined in international conventions and covenants beginning with the International Bill of Human Rights. (*See 10 Point agenda for a table on the Rights Evolution*). The obligation to eliminate sex-based discrimination against women to achieve gender equality is an essential piece of the international human rights framework. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reinforces the commitment to women’s rights, providing specific guidance on the range of actions that must be taken to achieve gender equality. [Source: *10-Point Agenda*].

**Gender:** Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). These roles and expectations are learned, changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures. Gender analysis has increasingly revealed how women’s subordination is socially constructed, and therefore able to change, as opposed to being biologically predetermined and therefore static. [Source: CIDA Policy]

**Gender analysis:** Gender analysis is the systematic attempt to identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities so that they can be properly addressed. Gender analysis provides the basis for gender mainstreaming and can be described as the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles [Source: European Commission (1998), *One Hundred Words for Equality: A glossary of terms on equality between women and men* (DG Employment and Social Affairs), [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/glossary/glossary\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/glossary/glossary_en.pdf)]

**Gender-sensitive analysis.** This tends to refer to more general policy analysis which takes gender issues/analysis into account (rather than those issues being the focus of the analysis). For example, in the analysis of a specific trade policy – if the analysis incorporated gender issues into the general analysis, then the analysis could be considered to be “gender-sensitive analysis”. [Source: *Beth Woroniuk*]

**Gender balance:** Equilibrium in numbers and power between women and men taking part in an activity, a structure or organization. Achieving gender balance generally requires a “rebalancing” of power, attitudes and authority [Based on / adapted from: *Glossary*, EuropeAid. [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/gender/glossary\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/gender/glossary_en.htm)]