



Recommendations for a Just and Feminist Post-Pandemic Transformation

The current crisis has exacerbated human rights and environmental abuses engendered by systemic forces such as white settler colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Federal recovery plans must deliver a just, decolonial, anti-racist and feminist transformation for all people and the planet.

Canada has an opportunity to contribute to a more resilient and equitable society that upholds human rights and respects ecological integrity and is rooted in anti-colonial, feminist political and socio-economic narratives that respect people and the environment. This means rejecting militarism, nationalism and other structural forms of violence and promoting a positive peace in which all people, especially women, can fully participate in political, economic and social life.ⁱ

KAIROS urges the federal government to invest in a future that promotes the integrity of our planet, people's access to basic human rights and the dignity of all peoples. KAIROS endorses the [Principles for a Just Recovery](#) and has joined an informal alliance of more than 300 national and local civil society groups to demand that recovery plans move us toward a more equitable and resilient future for all.ⁱⁱ

The following recommendations are rooted in KAIROS' core commitments for human rights and ecological justice. KAIROS is guided by this [Ethical Framework for a Post-COVID Recovery](#).ⁱⁱⁱ Some of the recommendations address issues arising directly from the pandemic, while others address pre-existing conditions that have intensified the threat of the virus for the most vulnerable populations.

Indigenous Rights and Racial Justice

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen more injustices unfold in relation to Indigenous peoples as governments continue to develop and uphold barriers to their rights. Moreover, the pandemic has highlighted the pressing need for a national action plan to address the impacts of systemic racism that has marginalized and disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) - particularly women and 2SLGBTQQIA people - for hundreds of years. The needs and priorities of BIPOC peoples must be the foundation of recovery plans and these plans must support an active process of decolonization – with ourselves and our communities – and also in how we develop industry and conduct research in this country.

- Ensure the full and meaningful representation of Black, Indigenous, people of colour - particularly women and 2SLGBTQQIA people - as well as civil society organizations in the development, design and implementation of COVID-19 response and recovery measures.

- Legislate the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This legislation should build on Bill C-262, which the federal government has committed to re-introducing in Parliament during the current session.
- Implement the Calls for Justice as outlined in [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).^{iv}

Economic and Climate Justice

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the interconnectedness of global economic and ecological crises. Uncontrolled resource extraction, deforestation, infrastructure development and the exploitation of wild species have created perfect conditions for the spillover of diseases.^v Ambitious action is needed to ensure global temperature rise does not exceed 1.5°C. Yet, a recent [study](#) revealed that since the beginning of the pandemic, Canada has spent \$11.86 billion supporting fossil fuel energy, and only \$222.78 million supporting clean energy.^{vi} Recovery plans for Canada must prioritize climate action and a just transition towards a net-zero economy.

Women and girls, especially in the Global South, are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, yet they are systematically underrepresented in both formal talks and control of resources for adaptation. Women are responsible for 50-80 percent of the world’s food production yet own less than 20 percent of the land, are overlooked as agents of change and knowledge, and have limited access to political, organizational, and financial resources. Lack of systemic, sustained attention to this sector is at odds with Feminist International Assistance Policy. Canada must play a leadership role in addressing the systematic underrepresentation of women in formal negotiations and the disproportionate impacts of climate change borne by women.

- Legislate net-zero by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 60% below 2005 levels by 2030.
- Develop a [National Decarbonization Strategy](#) that supports publicly owned agencies and assets, prioritizes investment in low-carbon infrastructure, and upholds Indigenous rights^{vii}.
 - Establish an independent body to monitor progress and to hold the government accountable to GHG targets;
 - Phase out oil, gas and coal production for fuel and place a moratorium on new oil and gas projects, including pipelines to export bitumen and liquefied natural gas; and
 - End all federal subsidies for oil, gas, and coal projects after 2020.
- Introduce a [Just Transition Act](#) with funding to support fossil fuel workers and communities in the transition to a clean energy economy.^{viii}
- Establish a [Strategic Training Fund](#) to recruit and prepare workers—especially workers from historically marginalized groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, and racialized Canadians—for jobs in the clean energy economy.^{ix}
- Allocate \$6.76 billion in climate finance between 2021/22 and 2025/26 and commit equal support for adaptation and mitigation in the Global South, with additional funding for loss and damages.^x

- Fund a dedicated grants-based Women’s Fund for Climate Adaptation, building capacity and expanding the influence of Global South grassroots women’s organizations and movements and working with Canadian civil society partners on an integrated, feminist global approach to the climate crisis.

Gender Justice

The COVID-19 pandemic is also an acutely gendered crisis. In the Global North and South, women are being disproportionately impacted as they make up the largest proportion of essential workers, particularly in healthcare settings, and are also responsible for the majority of care work within families and communities. The pandemic has significantly increased this burden and in some cases interrupted women’s ability to fully participate in formal and informal work and public activities. Innovative approaches to recovery need to recognize these extra responsibilities and find ways to accommodate and equalize them. Women community leaders, such as land and water defenders, and those from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds must be consulted in the design of the recovery process.

Domestically and globally, violence against women has increased significantly with the pandemic and associated lockdown. In Canada, gender-based and domestic violence rates have increased by an estimated 20 to 30 per cent in parts of the country. Globally, militaristic responses to the crisis have exacerbated violence, particularly against marginalized groups and human rights and land defenders. The pandemic has also led to an increase in armed conflict in some areas. In Colombia, the Philippines, and Brazil, especially, physical attacks and killings of land and water defenders continue unabated and seemingly with impunity.

Local women’s rights and peacebuilding organizations play a vital role in recovery and transition. Through their strong networks, connections with marginalized women and vulnerable communities, and experience in psychosocial support they can offer a way forward based on wellbeing, inclusivity, and sustainable peace.

Gendered Impacts of Resource Extraction

- Ensure the [Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise](#) is independent, grounded in a strong gender-based analysis framework, and has the power to investigate the Canadian corporate sector, including subsidiaries, for alleged human rights and environmental abuses at their overseas operations.^{xi}
- Adopt and fully implement a legal framework that requires extractive corporations to conduct consultations that abide by local Indigenous governance practices as stipulated by frameworks like the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. These processes must fully engage women and guarantee that communities near proposed project sites ultimately determine if and how a project will move forward.
- Enact a comprehensive human rights due diligence law that compels businesses to respect the most current international human rights standards across the entirety of their global operations and supply chains and holds them liable for harms caused by or on behalf of their operations.

This legislation must also address the links between resource extraction and gender-based violence.

- Facilitate access to Canadian courts for overseas plaintiffs, especially Indigenous women, who claim harm by the actions of Canadian mining companies and their subsidiaries.
- Adopt the guidelines and recommendations of reports such as [Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders](#)^{xii}, and [Raising her Voice: Confronting the Unique Challenges Facing Women Human Rights Defenders](#)^{xiii}, and others that recognize the leadership of Indigenous women human rights defenders and the importance of safeguarding their rights and well-being.

Women, Peace and Security

- Create an urgent response fund to help women's organizations around the world address local needs during the pandemic.
- Ensure that the different experiences of women and men during COVID are recognized and fully implemented in a recovery strategy.
- Demilitarize the language of the COVID-19 response, away from fighting the virus towards more inclusive language recognizing care and caregivers at the forefront of the pandemic response.
- Support the work of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders in their efforts to address the needs of their communities
- Increase available funds for response to and recovery from the pandemic in developing countries by raising official development assistance closer to the 0.7 percent global standard.

Migrant Justice

In Canada, migrant workers and refugee claimants play a vital role in the economy and care work. The pandemic has exacerbated conditions for migrant workers, who are exposed to overcrowding, unhygienic living quarters, limited access to benefits, and workplace abuse. COVID-19 has made it more urgent to improve the working and living conditions of migrant workers. Recovery plans must ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all those who come to Canada to work or escape danger and grant them permanent resident status.

- Provide [Status for All and Landed Status Now](#), meaning everyone in the country without permanent resident status must be regularized and given permanent resident status immediately, including migrant workers.^{xiv}
- Provide all people who come to Canada as migrant workers with permanent resident status on arrival, including those coming to Canada through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, Caregiver Program, Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, and other programs with work authorization permits.
- Provide the opportunity for migrant workers, refugees and individuals on study permits to be able to bring their families with them if they so choose.

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- ⁱ <https://www.kairoscanada.org/an-act-of-care-reframing-global-efforts-to-contain-covid-19>
- ⁱⁱ <https://justrecoveryforall.ca/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ [https://mcusercontent.com/7e01a5c2cd0783fe73181dc3e/files/2987b88b-bb93-4aef-a824-7c178f609d00/Ethical Framework for Post COVID Recovery.01.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/7e01a5c2cd0783fe73181dc3e/files/2987b88b-bb93-4aef-a824-7c178f609d00/Ethical_Framework_for_Post_COVID_Recovery.01.pdf)
- ^{iv} <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>
- ^v <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/27/halt-destruction-nature-worse-pandemics-top-scientists>
- ^{vi} <https://www.energypolicytracker.org/country/canada/>
- ^{vii} New Decade, New Deal — Alternative Federal Budget 2020 Our plan for a just and sustainable economy. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*.
<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2020/03/AFB%202020.pdf>
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} Ibid.
- ^x <http://climatechangeanddev.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/C4D-Climate-Finance-Policy-Brief-2019-WEB.pdf>
- ^{xi} https://core-ombuds.canada.ca/core_ombuds-ocre_ombuds/index.aspx?lang=eng
- ^{xii} https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/rights_defenders_guide_defenseurs_droits.aspx?lang=eng
- ^{xiii} <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FAAE/Reports/RP10585326/faaerp29/faaerp29-e.pdf>
- ^{xiv} <https://migrantrights.ca/statusforall/>