

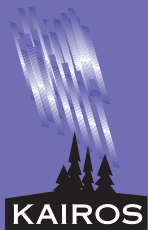


Federal Election Resource 2021

Election day in Canada is September 20. KAIROS encourages everyone to learn about the issues, read the party platforms, and exercise their democratic right to vote.

Election 2021 comes at a kairos time when multiple crises converge, and opportunities arise for transformational change. This KAIROS resource offers details on some of the most salient issues of our time: ecological justice, gender justice, Indigenous rights, and migrant justice.

It also includes questions for candidates, which include personal commitments, and encourage a deeper review and investment in a policy. Be sure to follow up with the candidate on your request, if you are able. This is a great opportunity to educate candidates on these critical issues.



TORONTO OFFICE

80 Hayden Street, Suite 400
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2
tel: 416-463-5312
toll free: 1-877-403-8933

OTTAWA OFFICE

211 Bronson Ave, Suite 306
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5
tel: 613-235-9956

kairoscanada.org

info@kairoscanada.org

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives is a faith-based social justice organization of ten Canadian churches and religious organizations. We focus on Indigenous rights, international human rights, and ecological and gender justice. We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social change and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation.

KAIROS acknowledges that the Toronto office is on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Seneca and Mississaugas of the Credit Indigenous Peoples. The Ottawa office is on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Peoples.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

Climate Emergency

The [sixth assessment report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) published in August 2021 concluded that “climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe with human influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes.” Many of the changes are unprecedented and some will be irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years.

The 2018 IPCC report warned that the world must limit warming to 1.5°C to avoid catastrophic impacts from climate change. This most recent report reaffirms that warning and finds that unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach.

According to Climate Action Tracker, the pledges and targets that governments have made to date, including National Determined Contributions and some long-term or net-zero targets, will only limit warming to about 2.4°C above pre-industrial levels. Canada’s pledges and targets are not even consistent with holding warming below 2°C. Furthermore, Canada has missed every emissions reduction target it has set to date.

The climate crisis requires strong leadership that will call for no new fossil fuel development projects, end fossil fuel subsidies, invest significantly in renewables, prioritize a transition that is just and equitable, and uphold Indigenous sovereignty and rights.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Will you commit to Canada’s fair share of the global climate effort by reducing domestic emissions by at least 60 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and implement 5-year interval carbon budgets to help ensure Canada never misses another target?
- Will you commit to ending the expansion of fossil fuel production in Canada and reject all new and proposed fossil fuel projects currently going through the federal evaluation system?
- Will you commit to ending all subsidies, public finance and other fiscal support to the oil and gas sector by 2022, including financial support provided through Export Development Canada?
- Will you commit to developing Just Transition legislation and a working group that includes trade unions, as well as women, Indigenous and racialized people who are currently underrepresented in well-paying and stable employment?
- Will you commit to providing equal support for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the Global South through international climate financing mechanisms, with additional funding for loss and damage, scaling up to Canada’s fair share contribution of \$5.2 billion annually until 2025?
- Will you commit to grants-based climate funding to build capacity and expand the influence of Global South grassroots women’s organizations and movements and work with Canadian civil society partners on an integrated, feminist global approach to the climate crisis?

BACKGROUND:

As the world continues to experience some of its hottest temperatures on record, with devastating wildfires, drought and more, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, and fossil fuels continue to be extracted and burned. The climate crisis is intensifying, and its impacts have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2018, [the IPCC](#) revealed that the world cannot afford a global temperature rise of more than 1.5°C if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change. We have less than a decade to take ambitious action for transformational change if we are to meet this deadline. This change will have to address the root causes of the crisis, such as colonialism, extractivism, and capitalism, and center the voices of those most impacted. Climate solutions and policies need to reflect Indigenous sovereignty and racial, gender and economic justice.

In 2020, Canada unveiled a strengthened [climate plan](#) to support its target of net-zero emissions by 2050 that includes a rising carbon pricing system that will reach CAD \$170 per tonne by 2030. In April 2021, Canada committed to a new carbon emissions reduction target of 40-45 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. These are positive steps towards limiting global temperature rise, but they are not enough. Analysis by Climate Action Network Canada shows that Canada's emissions reduction target should be 60 percent below 2005 levels for Canada to do its fair share to stabilize a global temperature rise at 1.5°C.

Since 2020, the federal government's support to the oil and gas sector has increased significantly. It has maintained its investment in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and other fossil fuel infrastructure that often violates Indigenous rights. The [International Energy Agency \(IEA\) released a report](#) in 2021 that concluded that any investment in new fossil fuel supply projects is incompatible with pathways to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The federal government needs to stop investing in an energy source with no future.

It has been over a decade since Canada first committed to ending fossil fuel subsidies. Yet in 2020, the [Government of Canada provided or announced](#) at least \$18 billion in subsidies and public financing for the oil and gas sector. In addition to direct financing, the government also supports oil and gas companies in their efforts to reduce their emissions and clean up, for example, orphaned and abandoned oil wells. In addition to these subsidies, the public continues to pay the price for air pollution, oil spills, and other externalities from the burning of fossil fuels. Funds are diverted from much needed investments in renewable energy and the transformation of buildings and the transportation sector and make a just transition for affected workers and communities more difficult. Canada needs to develop a roadmap to accelerate the phase out of fossil fuel subsidies and attach strict emissions conditions to government spending programs.

As the economy shifts from fossil fuels to clean energy alternatives, we need to ensure that workers and communities can transition as well. This means investing in re-training opportunities and ensuring that those who are traditionally excluded from well-paying and stable employment are included in the emerging economy. Recently, the federal government announced [a process to engage Canadians on potential elements of proposed just transition legislation](#) and the creation of a just transition advisory body. Trade unions, women, and Indigenous and racialized people who are underrepresented in the current energy sector must be part of this body and their needs centered in the development of any proposed legislation.

As an affluent country, with historically significant greenhouse gas emissions, Canada has the responsibility and resources to help others around the world to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Canada needs to contribute its fair share of the US\$100 billion in climate finance that was promised under the Paris Agreement. This means scaling up Canada's support to \$5.2 billion annually until 2025, including \$1.8 billion annually in bilateral climate finance. Fifty percent of these funds should go to adaptation and align with the Feminist International Assistance Policy as climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including women and girls, who bear little responsibility for creating the impacts they are now facing. Funding should be made available to grassroots women's organizations through grants-based, non-multilateral funding mechanisms.

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism is a type of systematic discrimination that links race and socio-economic status with increased environmental risk. Ecological justice cannot be separated from race in Canada; exposure to hazardous waste and environmental pollution, and prejudiced zoning decisions directly impact quality of life and the health of marginalized communities in this country.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Will your party reintroduce legislation to strengthen the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that recognizes the right to a healthy environment and protects people and nature from pollution?
- Will your party reintroduce legislation to develop a national strategy to redress environmental racism, building on Bill C-230?
- Will you commit to continuing and increasing federal investment in First Nations' access to safe drinking water?

BACKGROUND:

The legacy of environmental racism can be found across Canada: from the toxic landfills placed near the Black Nova Scotian communities of Shelburne and Lincolnville, to mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows First Nation, to the impacts of fossil fuel extraction across Canada, to the health and livelihoods threatened by the Mount Polley Mine disaster.

It is critical that all political parties in Canada acknowledge the impact environmental racism has on Indigenous, Black, and other racially marginalized communities and take meaningful steps to redress these harms. This includes passing the development of a national strategy to redress environmental racism, as proposed in [Bill C-230](#).

Bill C-230 would have given a legislative mandate for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to develop a national strategy and require the Minister to regularly:

- Examine the links between race, socio-economic status, and environmental risk.
- Collect information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards and negative health outcomes in affected communities.
- Assess the administration and enforcement of environmental laws and the ways federal laws and policies could be improved to better involve, compensate, and protect affected communities.

In addition to redressing the harms from environmental racism, Canada must also recognize the right to a healthy environment for every person in Canada. This year, the federal government tabled the [Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act \(Bill C-28\)](#). If passed, this bill would have modernized the 1999 Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which is out-of-date and ill-equipped to protect people from toxic chemicals and pollution. Bill C-28 recognizes that every person in Canada has the legal right to a healthy environment and would require the government to prepare a framework to implement this right. Bill C-28 would have begun to address the cumulative impacts of a range of toxic chemicals and harmful pollution and require the federal government to take vulnerable populations into account when making decisions about the regulation of toxic substances. All federal parties must work to pass environmental rights legislation that builds on Bill C-28.

The lack of clean drinking water in First Nations communities remains a gross violation of the human right to water and sanitation. The Canadian government committed to eliminate all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021, but as of August 2021, there were 51 long-term and 37 short-term drinking water advisories still in effect in First Nations communities. The federal government must commit the funding to eliminate long-term drinking water advisories and recognize Indigenous peoples' right to self-government and greater control of water resources.

Indigenous Rights

During the 2015 federal election campaign, the Liberals enjoyed strong support from Indigenous peoples in Canada because then federal Liberal leader Justin Trudeau made many promises to improve their lives, including a strong commitment to implement all the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which were issued a few months before in June.

In 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) released its final report and 231 Calls for Justice, also in June, four months before the federal election in October that led to a minority Liberal government. Upon release of this final report, Prime Minister Trudeau promised that his government would: “turn the inquiry’s calls for justice into real, meaningful, Indigenous-led action.”

This year, Indigenous issues are once again at the forefront and for many this election will be a referendum on how the Liberal government and Prime Minister Trudeau have lived up to those promises over the past six years. The discoveries of unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools, which Indigenous peoples have been talking about for generations, heightened awareness of Indigenous issues and highlighted the lack of progress on implementation of both the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls for Justice.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Will you commit to working with Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations to ensure compliance with all 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada?
- Will you commit to working with Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations, especially those representing Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, to ensure that the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) are implemented?
- Will you commit to working with Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations so that Bill C-15, *An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, succeeds in ensuring that Canada’s laws, policies, and programs are consistent with the global human rights standards affirmed in the *UN Declaration*?
- Will you commit to ending all remaining drinking water advisories in First Nations communities?
- How will you support First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities to address current challenges and create positive change?
- What is your plan for empowering Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada?

BACKGROUND:

According to a study published by the Yellowhead Institute in December 2020, “Canada has only completed 8 of the 94 Calls to Action—a decrease from our findings last year (which found that only 9 had been completed).”

On June 1, 2021 the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) President Lorraine Whitman sent a letter to Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett, saying that NWAC believed the government’s plan to address the 231 calls for justice was “fundamentally flawed.” In a tweet

expressing the organization's loss of confidence in the government, President Whitman said "NWAC is unveiling our own national action plan – a plan that puts families, not politics, first. We've walked away from the Government of @Canada toxic process to come up with a real plan."

On June 16, KAIROS joined Indigenous peoples in Canada in celebrating the passage of Bill C-15, *An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This long-awaited national legislation to implement the *UN Declaration* establishes a clear and ongoing legal commitment for the Government of Canada to ensure that its laws, policies, and programs are consistent with the global human rights standards affirmed in the *UN Declaration*, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent.

It is hoped this legislation will help to address ongoing injustices and rights violations by governments against Indigenous peoples, including around land and resources. However, a recent bi-lateral agreement between Canada and the government of Newfoundland & Labrador was concluded without informing or consulting with the Innu Nation and threatens to deny the Innu benefits from resource extraction on their traditional territory. This sets a dangerous precedent and undermines trust in the government's commitment to implementing this legislation.

Another promise Justin Trudeau made in 2015 was to end **all** long-term drinking water advisories in First Nations communities by March 2021. In December 2020, after lifting more than 100 long term drinking water advisories in five years, the Liberal government acknowledged it would miss the overall deadline. Then, in March 2021, the government renewed its commitment to ending **all** the advisories but wouldn't set a new deadline. There are currently 51 long-term drinking-water advisories in 37 First Nations communities at this time of writing.

In a recent Maclean's article, former TRC Commissioner and Senator Murray Sinclair was asked if he thought there is "enough pressure now for the hard policy work to happen." Sinclair's answer: "I don't think there's enough, but I think the pressure has increased. I think the difficulty that I have always seen with regard to the government's approach to the TRC calls to action, and the *UN Declaration*, and the whole question of reconciliation, has been that they don't have a map. The government of Canada has never developed a plan of action about how they are going to achieve reconciliation. They do not hold their system accountable for achieving reconciliation."

Gender Justice

Corporate Accountability for Gender Justice

A gender justice approach to corporate accountability is key to addressing the climate emergency.

With only voluntary corporate social responsibility measures in place, the Government of Canada leaves the door open for Canadian companies and their business partners to cause harm to people and ecologies, and contribute to global heating.

KAIROS holds that the Canadian government must institute multiple and complementary measures that integrate a gender-based approach to address how Canadian companies, their supply chains, and other business partners harm impacted communities, human rights defenders, and the environment. These measures include:

1. An [empowered](#) Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) with the mandate to compel witnesses and documents to conduct investigations into allegations of human rights and environmental abuses by the Canadian extractive sector abroad.
2. Enactment of mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation based on the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability's (CNCA) blueprint, [the Corporate Respect for Human Rights and the Environment Abroad Act](#). Such legislation would require Canadian companies with operations overseas to avoid—and report on the steps taken to prevent—human rights and environmental violations. As well, companies would face significant consequences if/when they cause harm or fail to conduct due diligence.
3. Implementation of the [Calls for Extractive and Development Industries](#) in the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.
4. Adoption and measurable implementation of guidelines and recommendations in support of human rights defenders, especially women in [Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders](#) and [Raising Her Voice: Confronting the Unique Challenges Facing Women Human Rights Defenders](#).

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Will your party commit to empowering the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise and enacting mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation as recommended by Canada's international human rights parliamentary subcommittee?
- Will you commit to implement the Calls for Extractive and Development Industries in *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*?
- Will you support the Government of Canada's adoption and integration of the guidelines in *Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders* and the recommendations in *Raising Her Voice: Confronting the Unique Challenges Facing Women Human Rights Defenders*?

BACKGROUND:

When it comes to mining, Canada is a leader in terms of global reach and scope. However, Canadian mining companies' reputation is replete with allegations of human rights and environmental violations, which compound the climate emergency.

Women living in impacted communities as well as women environmental rights defenders [report on the impacts they encounter](#) as a result of their proximity to extractive megaprojects with links to Canada—within and beyond Canada's geopolitical borders. Contamination of water sources for drinking, cooking, and cleaning; health issues brought on by pollution; vast alterations to the physical and social fabric; and increases in gender-based violence have all accompanied Canada's extractive sector.

[The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) confirms the violent ramifications of an extractive sector encouraged but not mandated to adopt business human rights measures. Allegations of gender-based violence have also been brought to the fore by [women in the Global South](#).

Canadian companies and/or their subsidiaries and other business partners are regularly linked to attacks on environmental rights defenders who protect land, water, and air from the negative impacts of extractive projects. Increasingly, companies, with the support of governments, are criminalizing women land and water defenders for non-violent forms of protest and dissent. Most human rights defenders killed each year worked on the intersection of Indigenous, land, and environmental rights.

The Government of Canada claims to encourage companies to promote human rights and the environment but without mandatory and enforceable measures, companies will continue to carry out violations free of consequences.

While the office of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) is now in operation, [the mandate is limited](#). The CORE merely reviews allegations and offers to be a mediator between industry and impacted communities. The Government of Canada refuses to grant the Ombudsperson the investigatory tools to compel documents and testimony—effectively rendering the office ineffectual.

In addition to an empowered CORE, Canada must enact mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD) legislation that would require companies and their business partners to (1) prevent harming communities and the environment and (2) conduct due diligence. This legislation would impose significant consequences to companies that failed to do both. The CNCA has [released](#) draft mHREDD, which KAIROS endorses.

The Canadian government continues to prioritize companies over human rights and the future of the planet, despite recommendations on business and human rights outlined in its own reports and guidelines: [Mandate of The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders](#), and [Raising Her Voice: Confronting the Unique Challenges Facing Women Human Rights Defenders](#).

International Cooperation and Women, Peace and Security

KAIROS believes Canada has a moral obligation to do more to address the rise in global inequity and disparity that COVID-19 has exposed and magnified. Political and financial support to women peacebuilders and human rights defenders must be central to these just recovery efforts. To build back more equitable, healthy and safe societies for everyone, KAIROS continues to call on the Canadian government to:

- Develop the new Feminist Foreign Policy with full and meaningful representation of Black, Indigenous and people of colour, particularly women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, a policy that is grounded in Indigenous and racial justice, is human rights based and intersectional, and does not allow economic and corporate interests to obstruct these principles.
- Fully fund and implement the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), increasing official development assistance from 0.28 percent of national wealth to the international standard of 0.7 percent, and ensures that this funding reaches grassroots women's rights and peacebuilding organizations. To be accessible to local women's organizations this funding must be flexible, predictable, and long-term.
- Create and provide urgent and ample funding to help women's organizations around the world address local needs immediately and post-COVID-19 pandemic. This funding must support their recovery and transformation efforts in response to the pandemic.
- Advocate with governments of countries in conflict and at the UN to increase space for women to participate in peace and human rights processes at local, national, and international levels, in adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and to ensure that the lives and rights of these women are protected.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- How will you ensure that foreign policy is human rights based, intersectional and feminist?
- Are you committed to increasing official development assistance from 0.28 percent of national wealth to the international standard of 0.7 percent? Do you have a plan? How will you ensure that this funding reaches grassroots women's rights and peacebuilding organizations?
- What measures will you take to ensure support to grassroots women's organizations in their recovery and transformation efforts in response to the pandemic?
- What will you do to increase space for women's meaningful participation in peace and human rights processes and to ensure that the lives and rights of these women are protected?

BACKGROUND:

Canada's response to the pandemic must be global. It must include funding for partners in the Global South to respond to the devastating impacts of COVID-19 and address increased vulnerabilities and inequalities. Moreover, Canada's response must include political and financial support to local women peacebuilders and human rights defenders in their efforts to address the needs of their communities.

As a rich nation, Canada has a moral obligation to join countries such as Norway in bringing our Overseas Development Assistance contribution from 0.28 percent of national wealth to the

international standard of 0.7 percent. The majority of Canadians support this. According to a recent Abacus Data poll (December 2020) commissioned by Cooperation Canada, 74 percent of respondents want Canada to either play a leading role, or at least match the contributions of similar wealthy countries. As well, Canadians agree by a two to one margin that we should support poorer countries in building back better after COVID-19.

Canada adopted its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) in 2017, based on strong evidence that local women's organizations and programs are effective agents for sustainable, inclusive and equitable development and peacebuilding. These women's organizations have also been at the frontlines of the COVID-19 response as well as building back a more sustainable, peaceful and healthy future.

But Canada's FIAP continues to be hamstrung by limited funding and political support.

Canada has also committed to adopting a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP). This is an opportunity for Canada to contribute to a society that is rooted in anti-colonial, feminist political and socio-economic narratives that respect people and the environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and intensified the need and the urgency for a FFP that addresses these systemic issues while supporting the role and participation of women rights defenders, women's organizations, networks and movements in the development and implementation of these policies.

KAIROS' international partners, operating in some of the most protracted conflict areas in the world, report dramatic increases in gender-based domestic and state-driven violence since the beginning of the pandemic. This situation is fueled by escalating inequality, heightened vulnerabilities and a rise in religious and cultural fundamentalism that is inherently misogynistic.

Despite these growing threats, women-led grassroots organizations offer women a lifeline, helping them heal, earn incomes, and become agents of positive change in their communities and countries. Twenty years ago, the United Nations Security Council Resolution reaffirmed the important role women play in preventing and resolving conflicts, including humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction, by adopting Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Canada's response must include political and financial support to local women peacebuilders and human rights defenders in their efforts to address the needs of their communities. We cannot build back a better, more equitable and safer world if international partners – particularly grassroots women-led organizations – continue to be underfunded.

MIGRANT JUSTICE

Temporary foreign migrant workers play a vital role in Canada's food and care sectors, filling the jobs that too few Canadians want.

COVID-19 has exposed and enhanced the vulnerability of these vital workers. The overcrowded and often unhygienic living quarters of field workers, limited access to benefits, workplace abuse, and the dangers posed by COVID-19 are only a few examples.

The federal government recently addressed some of the problems exacerbated by the pandemic by lowering eligibility requirements for EI benefits, introducing new criteria for employers to help safeguard workers' safety, and temporarily opening up [permanent residency](#) applications to 90,000 people, 50,000 of whom are workers in health care and other essential sectors.

While this response is encouraging, workers continue to face barriers accessing benefits and receive no support if they lose their status due to program changes. In addition, there is no guarantee of compliance to public health directives on farms, in meat processing facilities, and other workplaces. Also, the permanent residency application, which ends November 5, is challenging to those with limited time to gather all the necessary documentation and pass language tests, and does not apply to non-status temporary foreign workers.

The most effective and efficient action Canada can take in safeguarding these workers is to provide Status for All and Landed Status Now.

This means that everyone in the country without permanent resident status must be regularized and given permanent resident status, including migrant workers, study permit holders, and refugee claimants.

Of note, many foreign migrant workers are from countries impacted by climate change. In 2019, the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a non-binding national climate emergency in Canada. Missing in the motion was the impact of climate change on forced migration and a clear action plan and budget to support the motion and mitigate the impact.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Will you and your party recognize the vital role that temporary foreign workers play in Canada's economy and society and pledge to end Canada's problematic Temporary Foreign Workers Program by granting Status for All as the strategy to strengthen the country, including meeting labour market demands? How will you do this and what support do you need from civil society organizations? What are the reasons for not granting Status for All?
- Will you and your party commit to the regularization of undocumented and non-status foreign workers?
- Globally, will your party take the lead to recognize climate refugees and migrant workers, distinguishing them from "economic migrants"?
- Will you draft an International Protocol to recognize and protect the rights of climate affected and forced migrants, and lobby the United Nations for its adoption and ratification?

BACKGROUND:

KAIROS, temporary migrant workers and allied advocates have for years called on the Canadian government to grant permanent residency on arrival to all foreign migrant workers and their families.

For decades, Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) has made it difficult for caregivers – and impossible for other foreign workers - to become permanent residents. This approach has manifested in consistent and widespread complaints and well-documented cases of exploitation and abuse at the hands of employers and recruiters. As workers were tied to one employer, they too often kept silent for fear of deportation. Also, the prolonged family separation caused by prohibiting spouses and children from joining workers has been deeply stressful, sometimes leading to marital breakdowns.

In the last few years, the federal government introduced programs to address some of these egregious problems. Some of them include:

- A pilot program for migrant caregivers, launched in 2019, which includes full permanent residence status after working in Canada for two years, and occupation-specific work permits, enabling caregivers to change jobs quickly and easily to escape abusive conditions without fear of deportation. It also allows open work permits for spouses and common-law partners, and study permits for dependent children, so that caregivers' families may accompany them to Canada.
- The Open Work Permit for Workers at Risk provides workers with the opportunity to leave abusive situations. However, the onus is on the workers to provide proof of abuse and there is no guarantee the permit will be granted.
- In April 2021, the federal government announced a new pathway to permanent residency for over 90,000 essential temporary workers and international graduates. Applications end November 5 and require meeting language benchmarks too challenging for a significant number of migrant workers.
- The [IRCC announced](#) that beginning July 26, 2021, individuals who applied for the [recently opened pathway](#) to permanent residence will be eligible for an open work permit while awaiting the results of their application.
- The 2021 federal budget allocates \$6.3 million over three years to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to support faster processing and improved service delivery of open work permits for vulnerable workers to help them find a job. The government also commits \$49.5 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to supporting community-based organizations in the provision of migrant worker-centric programs and services through the new Migrant Worker Support Program. It has also allocated \$54.9 million over three years to increase inspections of employers and ensure that temporary foreign workers have appropriate working conditions and wages.

While many of these improvements are laudable, a sustained permanent residency application and regularization program for undocumented foreign workers will help protect them from unscrupulous employers and recruiters.

Indeed, Canada has a history of administering successful regularization programs, beginning in 1960. The Adjustment of Status Program in 1973 was the largest of its kind in Canadian history, addressing the large number of non-status people in the country at the time. It regularized approximately 39,000 people from more than 150 countries.

Workers come to Canada for work or a living wage they struggle to find in their home countries. However, more and more temporary foreign workers choose to work in Canada to escape the impacts of extreme weather events, prolonged temperature extremes, and rising sea levels. For example, some foreign migrant workers in Canada left their homes after hurricanes devastated their countries. People in the Global South typically suffer the brunt of climate change despite their small carbon footprint compared with those in the Global North.

Those forced to leave their homes due to climate-induced events fall through the cracks of international refugee and immigration policy. The UN Global Compact for Migration, adopted in 2018, does not grant “specific legal international protection to climate-induced migrants,” according to Louise Arbour, the U.N. official who led the migration compact. As the number of climate refugees and migrants increases, it is imperative that countries like Canada work with global partners to secure a binding document that defines and protects this vulnerable group.

further reading: [Migration and Precarity Policy Brief](#).

Vaccine Equity Action*

Canada can and must play a greater leadership role in ensuring vaccine equity, especially when it comes to prioritizing vaccine access for the most vulnerable populations around the world.

Informed by our international and domestic partners and working with member churches and the Love My Neighbour campaign, KAIROS is calling on Canada to:

- Create and implement a re-distribution and donation plan for all of Canada's 94 million surplus vaccine doses to COVAX, in parallel to our vaccine rollout at home.
- Support the temporary Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, presented to the World Trade Organization.
- Increase support for global health systems through an increased Official Development Assistance budget, with funding specially designated for community-based health organizations and local women's organizations.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES (FROM THE LOVE MY NEIGHBOUR CAMPAIGN):

- Will you go on record in support of a comprehensive global plan to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all, including sharing more doses and limiting booster shots until more of the global population is vaccinated?
- Will you go on record in support of the temporary waiver of intellectual property barriers to vaccine production worldwide at the World Trade Organization to allow for increased vaccine production in multiple countries as soon as possible?
- How will you work to increase Canadian support for health systems around the world, especially for those run by community organizations, to ensure vaccines are able to be administered safely and quickly? Will you go on record in support of increasing Canada's Official Development Assistance toward 0.7 percent of our gross national income by 2030 in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

BACKGROUND:

Canada currently has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. We have enough vaccine doses that everyone who wishes to be vaccinated can access a vaccine.

Low- and middle-income countries will not access enough doses to vaccinate more than 20 percent of their population until 2022. Currently, only 1.1 percent of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose, compared to 26.9 percent of the total world population, the majority of which are located in high-income countries, according to figures from [Our World in Data](#). Despite this stark inequality, some countries are already planning booster vaccine shots. Administering boosters to already vaccinated populations will further limit global vaccination efforts. The World Health Organization is urging a ban on booster doses until at least the end of September when there is expected to be a minimum of 10 percent vaccination coverage in every country.

Additionally, as vaccination numbers stagnate in vaccinated populations, unused vaccines end up being destroyed instead of sent to areas where they are needed most. Local health systems around the

world also need to be strengthened to ensure that available vaccines can be shipped, stored, and administered safely and quickly.

As a global community, we currently have enough vaccines and vaccine manufacturing capacities to ensure that everyone can be vaccinated. However, there is no global vaccination plan in place to ensure that everyone is protected against COVID-19 and that vaccination, including vaccine boosters, is equitable and prioritizes essential workers and the most vulnerable no matter where they live. While acknowledging Canadian efforts so far, participants believe that Canada can take more of a leadership role in urging the creation of a global vaccination plan and ensuring that our own policies around vaccine donations, trade, and global health spending support ending the pandemic globally.

Canada can also show greater leadership on vaccine equity by supporting the temporary Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, presented to the World Trade Organization. This waiver will ensure that trade regulations and licensing do not impede the timely manufacture, distribution, and affordability of vaccines. Without the TRIPS waiver, many low- and middle-income countries may not have access to anywhere near sufficient vaccines before 2023. Given that TRIPS explicitly recognizes the right to compulsory licencing of Intellectual property (IP) in order to protect public health, and given that IP for mRNA vaccines is primarily the result of academic research and public funding rather than corporate innovation, IP should not be a barrier to scaling up global production in a time of public health emergency. This pandemic has made painfully clear that as a global community we need stronger vaccine and pharmaceutical capacity in every continent.

Canada's response to the pandemic must also include funding for partners in the Global South to respond to the devastating impacts of COVID-19 and address increased vulnerabilities and inequalities. This requires increasing Canada's official development assistance from the current 0.28 percent to the 0.7 percent global standard to strengthen a long term, sustainable, feminist and human rights-based approach to health systems and recovery.

**Many thanks to Mennonite Central Committee Canada and Love My Neighbour for allowing KAIROS to adapt their resources.*