JOINT STATEMENT — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget 2026 Recognizes the Essential Role of National Women's Rights Organizations. Sustained Operational Funding Must Follow.

Ten national women's rights organizations call on the government to commit to multi-year mission funding in the Spring Economic Update

OTTAWA, November 6, 2026 — Ten of Canada's national women's rights organizations (NWROs) are deeply disappointed that Budget 2026 does not include multi-year operational funding for the leading organizations that defend and advance women's rights in Canada. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance recommended this funding in its pre-budget report. Without it, these organizations will continue to operate on limited project-based funding that constrains their scope of work and ability to drive systemic change toward achieving substantive gender equality for girls, women and gender-diverse people in Canada.

Creating systemic change means tackling the underlying causes of inequality. It includes countering the growing influence of regressive movements that promote hostility toward women and harmful gender stereotypes.

"This is a bitter disappointment for our organizations and for the women we serve," said Aline Nizigama, CEO of YWCA Canada. "We were told that building Canada means including women. This budget had the chance to back those words with a critical investment, and it did not."

Our request was for $10 million a year for five years, beginning in 2027–28. That is a reasonable investment, especially when the government has already accepted the case for stable operational funding for national sport organizations. The organizations defending women and gender diverse people's rights and lives deserve the same stability.

Short-term project funding makes it hard for our organizations to keep skilled staff, sustain expertise or undertake any work beyond the narrow confines of a given project, including providing our expertise to the federal government to inform legislation, policy and program development.

It is encouraging that Budget 2026 acknowledged the important role of national women's rights organizations, recognizing "the value of this national capacity" and committing the federal government to strengthening it.

Our organizations provide much of the legal, research, and policy expertise in Canada on women and gender diverse people's rights, from ending gender-based violence to removing barriers to economic participation. We also support hundreds of local and grassroots groups across the country. The government has promised that women's rights in Canada "will never be compromised." At a time when

those rights are under growing attack in Canada and around the world, stable funding for this work matters more than ever.

A solution is within reach. The funding we proposed would not begin until 2027–28, so there is still time to end the funding precarity facing national women's rights organizations. We urge Prime Minister Carney, Finance Minister Champagne and Minister Valdez to commit to multi-year operational funding in the Spring Economic Update or sooner, and we call on Members of Parliament of all parties to support it.

"We remain ready to work with the government to get this right," said Candice Shaw, Executive Director of the Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada. “Investing in women and gender diverse people's rights and security is investing in a strong economy, and it is not too late to make that investment."

The national women's rights organizations behind this statement:

YWCA Canada
Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW)
The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)
DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada)
Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada (ESVA Canada)
National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL)
Canadian Coalition for Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT)
Women's Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF)
Women's Shelters Canada

Media contacts:

YWCA Canada Media Contact:
Dana Dignard, National Director, Communications
ddignard@ywcacanada.ca
437-997-0992

Women’s Shelters Canada Media Contact
Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director
adugal@endvaw.ca
514-994-6804

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