

INTERVENTION: GENDER

Chair,

When the voices of women and girls are present in decision making and leadership, policies and programmes can be better designed to address the needs of all people. Canada advocates for the full, equal, and meaningful participation (and leadership) of all women and girls in economic, social, and political life – not only as a matter of human rights, but as a driver of inclusive and resilient societies. Such participation is foundational to achieving peace, prosperity, and sustainable development for all, and is central to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Canada promotes the adoption of gender-responsive approaches in all sectors and domains as a crucial means to advance gender equality. The elimination of gender inequalities requires both recognition and response. Gender responsive approaches can promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and the empowerment of women and girls – critical factors for driving sustainable development. Gender responsive policies create opportunities for all which reduces poverty and fosters resilience.

Canada remains firmly committed to advancing gender equality and the full enjoyment of the human rights of all women and girls. Gender equality is not only a core Canadian value; it is also fundamental to achieving sustainable development, inclusive peace and security, and the effective implementation of the commitments we have collectively undertaken across the United Nations system.

We are increasingly concerned by efforts to weaken or remove previously agreed language on gender equality in multilateral negotiations. Such efforts risk contributing to the gradual erosion of internationally agreed norms and standards that have been built through decades of consensus. This erosion has practical consequences. When established gender equality language is diluted or omitted from resolutions, policy frameworks, and programme documents, it can weaken our collective ability to deliver meaningful outcomes and diminish protections for those who continue to face discrimination and inequality.

Failure to defend GE language risks contributing to the erosion of fundamental norms and standards that are of critical importance to Canada, including those related to GE and human rights.

Canada believes that our negotiations should build upon, rather than revisit or roll back, existing commitments. We therefore encourage all delegations to uphold longstanding, agreed terminology on gender equality and to reaffirm its central importance in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the broader objectives of the United Nations.

At the same time, Canada will continue to work constructively and collaboratively with partners to resist attempts to weaken these commitments. We are particularly concerned by efforts to introduce language that is inconsistent with established UN terminology or that seeks to redefine or qualify the concept of gender equality in ways that depart from previously agreed outcomes. Preserving the integrity of existing commitments is essential to maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the multilateral system.

Canada strongly believes that progress is best achieved through dialogue, cooperation, and consensus. In this spirit, we will continue to coordinate closely with like-minded partners, engaging through constructive diplomacy to defend agreed language while seeking solutions that preserve unity wherever possible.

Should consensus prove unattainable, Canada will continue to support efforts to retain established references to gender equality. Where proposals seek to strengthen or preserve existing agreed language, Canada will support those efforts. Conversely, where proposals seek to remove or substantially weaken such language, Canada will advocate for maintaining the original text and will act accordingly in any subsequent vote.

Where negotiated outcomes ultimately include language that is inconsistent with Canada's longstanding positions or established international commitments, Canada will carefully consider the use of an Explanation of Position or Explanation of Vote to clarify its interpretation and reaffirm its commitment to gender equality and human rights.

Chair,

Protecting agreed language is not simply about preserving words on a page. It is about safeguarding the commitments we have made to women and girls around the world and ensuring that the multilateral system remains capable of advancing equality, dignity, and human rights for all.

Canada remains committed to working with all Member States to strengthen our collective efforts in support of these shared objectives.

Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is one of the most effective ways to eradicate poverty and build a more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous world. UN Member States have repeatedly recognized and affirmed the importance of gender equality in international texts ranging from the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Pact for the Future (2024) (amongst numerous other resolutions and declarations across multilateral fora). Gender equality has a multiplier effect on all 17 SDGs and leads to wider impacts that go beyond women and girls. For example, gender equality can improve economic growth outcomes as the increased participation of women in the workforce strengthens economies and GDPs.

Acknowledging the distinction between sex and gender, and using accurate terminology, is essential to eliminating all forms of discrimination and advancing equality. Underlying drivers of discrimination and violence against women and girls are rooted in gender inequality, including unequal power relations, patriarchal systems, gender stereotypes and negative social norms. Recognizing that discrimination against women and girls is gender-based, not biologically driven, enables us to work towards effective solutions. It allows us to think beyond the physical attributes of an individual to address wider systems, beliefs, and institutions that perpetuate gender inequality.

Thank you.