



Canadian Federation of University Women  
Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités

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December 18, 2012

The Honourable Peter Kent  
Minister of the Environment  
[Peter.kent@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Peter.kent@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Mr. Kent:

**Re: Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Inclusion of Women**

I am writing you on behalf of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to express our concern about the negative impacts of climate change on people and communities worldwide, particularly those who are most vulnerable, and to ask the federal government to take a lead role both at home and internationally to address this issue.

In this regard, we ask that the Government of Canada take leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation by:

1. Studying the impacts of climate change on vulnerable Canadians including women and children, low income people and Aboriginal peoples using systematic gender sensitive research and analysis;
2. Ensuring that women are included in all stages of decision making in the design of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies including the implementation, and evaluation of interventions, both nationally and internationally;
3. Providing financial assistance to other levels of government within Canada and to the least developed countries of the world to help them mitigate and adapt to climate change; and
4. Respecting and acting on its international, agreements, covenants and funding commitments under the Kyoto agreement and its successors, ensuring that gender equality and gender differences are respected and accommodated.

The CFUW National voting body adopted a resolution to this effect at our 2012 Annual General Meeting.

As I am sure you are aware, the impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed. The poorest, least developed countries are less able to mitigate and adapt to its effects. People living in poverty, especially women are particularly vulnerable. For instance, in many developing countries women play a central role in food production and provision, family care, fuel and water collection and overall community well-being. Hunger, population migration, labour intensification, wars over access to fertile land or water, and the necessity to travel further to collect water or fuel are just a few of the impacts that put women at greater risk of harm as a result of climate change.

At the same time, women's first-hand experience and knowledge can contribute immensely to governments' efforts to identify climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The inclusion and participation of women in Canada at multiple levels is also vital to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. At the family and community level, women often take primary responsibility for household recycling, efficient energy use, the purchase and preparation of food, and the education and care of family members. Due to the wide range of demographic, geographic and climate differences in Canada, local involvement, especially from women in the North where they know the environment intimately, is particularly important.

However, in Canada, women's participation in developing a national response to climate change has been fairly low. Women remain under-represented in senior positions at all levels of government. Within the two leading federal departments addressing climate change - Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada—women's employment is below the federal public service rate as a whole.

In 1998, after the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, a consultative process with about 500 representatives from industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, and governments was set up to provide recommendations to reach the national Green House Gas emissions targets. Women were a minority in all but one of the working groups. CFUW views the involvement of women at all levels as imperative to the progress of climate change initiatives in the twenty-first century. We hope that you share this view.

CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization of 9,000 women. These women are members of 110 CFUW Clubs located in every province across Canada. Since its founding in 1919, CFUW has been working to improve the status of women, and to promote human rights, public education, social justice, and peace. It holds special consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and belongs to the Education Committee of the Canadian Sub-Commission to UNESCO. CFUW is the largest of the 61 affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

We would appreciate receiving a response outlining your position on these important issues and the initiatives the Government of Canada has undertaken to ensure the equitable inclusion and participation of women in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Canada and abroad.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Murphy  
President, CFUW National

Cc:  
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
The Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources  
The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women  
The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of International Cooperation