



SCALING UP AMBITION

Future Planning Initiative
**Response to the Government
of Canada's Annual Report
on its 10-Year Commitment
to Sexual and Reproductive
Health and Rights Spending**

In 2019 Prime Minister Trudeau announced a 10-year funding commitment to advance the health and rights of women and girls worldwide with a focus on advancing the most neglected areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This historic investment will increase Canada's funding to \$1.4 billion per year by the end of 2023 to support women and girls' health around the world, with \$700 million of the annual investment dedicated to a comprehensive approach to SRHR.

A unique component of the 10-year commitment (10YC) is the focus on advancing four of the most underfunded and neglected areas of SRHR where Canada can make a difference, identified as: adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, including comprehensive sexuality education; contraceptive care; safe abortion care; and advocacy for SRHR.

Canada's commitment to global health and SRHR is in line with its Feminist International Assistance Policy and advances the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The focus on the neglected areas came out of the first Future Planning Initiative (FPI) retreat held in 2016. This first retreat, which included over 40 senior stakeholders representing Canadian and international civil society organizations, government representatives, publicly elected officials, activists, and the private sector, secured a shared understanding of the interconnected nature of SRHR interventions and identified global gaps to creating a comprehensive approach. It was here that priority areas were identified by looking at the most neglected and stigmatized areas of SRHR that suffer from a lack of funding and programming, and where stakeholders believed Canada could make the greatest impact.

The 10YC builds on more than a decade of investment by Canada in global health. Each phase of that commitment has had a stronger focus on women's rights and increasingly strategic investments in the neglected areas. Those commitments include:

- » \$2.85 billion from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015 to Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (Muskoka);
- » \$3.5 billion from 2015-2016 to 2020-2021 to the renewed Maternal, Newborn and Child Health;
- » \$650 million from 2017-2018 to 2020-2021 for SRHR (Her Voice, Her Choice); and
- » \$1.4 billion per year from 2019-2020 to 2029-2030 (10YC to women and children's health).

To monitor progress on the delivery of Canada's commitment, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) developed an accountability framework in consultation with global health stakeholders and Canadian civil society partners, including members of the FPI. In January 2023, the department released its inaugural annual report on spending towards Canada's 10YC announced in 2019. The report provides a progress update on the 10YC's first year of implementation, from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, focusing on financial, policy, and programmatic achievements based on the accountability framework. Outcomes highlighted in the report include:

- » \$1.22 billion of a 1.4 billion scale-up target was disbursed
- » \$489 million was allocated to SRHR and \$730 million to broader global health and nutrition objectives;
- » \$104 million was invested in the four SRHR neglected areas; and
- » Programming was implemented through 425 projects in partnership with 202 organizations.

As Canada moves forward in the implementation of the 10YC, this briefing note outlines where success should be celebrated and where questions remain as to whether and how Canada will effectively deliver on its commitment.

WHAT WE ARE CELEBRATING

**Robust
Accountability**

**Centering
Neglected
Areas**

**Recognizing
the Role of
Diplomacy**

Canada is leading in SRHR investment accountability and transparency

The annual report was produced in line with an accountability framework developed in collaboration with stakeholders and civil society. It uses new sector codes to track investments specifically in the neglected areas of SRHR. These new SRHR-specific funding codes make visible what is being funded and can be used by advocates to ensure the Government's priorities remain on track to support the most underfunded areas of work. Additionally, GAC states it has taken considerable steps to strengthen its coding guidance and its staff training to ensure that 10YC programming is coded in line with the Development Assistance Committee sector codes of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This commitment has allowed us to build a shared language around SRHR financial tracking mechanisms.

A bold investment not only in sexual health and rights, but also in financial tracking and accountability systems will make clear the impact of Canada's programmatic delivery. The report itself demonstrates that Canada is stepping up to the plate to ensure that the unique and catalytic nature of its global investment can be seen and felt by others. This type of global leadership sets a strong precedent for other countries to follow suit, inspiring their diplomatic and financial commitments to be paired with transparency and robust tracking mechanisms. Canada's commitment to transparency around its financial spending and allocation through the accountability report is also key to building trust with stakeholders. This trust and transparency are essential elements to successfully deliver agreed outcomes and results.

Canada is centering its approach on the neglected areas

What distinguishes the programmatic evolution of the 10YC from previous SRHR investments is the focus on the neglected areas of SRHR. These underfunded areas continue to put women and girls at risk of injury and death and undermine their access to other human rights. Prioritizing the neglected areas highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to SRHR that responds to the needs of all persons throughout their lives.

To move the SRHR agenda forward, it is imperative that the neglected areas are well understood, the principles for addressing them are clearly articulated, and examples of achievements in these areas are shared. The accountability report has articulated a rights-based description of the neglected areas which lays the foundation for improved accountability and research, data collection, and monitoring and evaluation of SRHR programs.

Canada's work on the neglected areas is particularly noteworthy, given that so few other donor countries work in this space. Focusing on the neglected areas can concentrate financial and political efforts in a way that maximizes impact and catalyzes support from others. There is a tremendous need for Canada's leadership in terms of financial support, service provision, and advocacy in these areas.

Canada recognizes the role of diplomacy and global influence

Canada has committed to taking bold leadership in SRHR. The Government has demonstrated its strong commitment through impressive financial investments supporting global SRHR. Being a leader also means that Canada must be a vocal and bold advocate on the global stage, ensuring its overall commitment to the protection and advancement of SRHR worldwide.

The 10YC report comes to this same conclusion, recognizing that financial commitments must be paired with “strong policy, programming and advocacy leadership”¹ and notes the need for advancing “policy objectives through global fora, such as the G7/G20 and the UN, advocating for strong SRHR and gender equality language and commitments.”² Its stated commitment of playing a critical role in the SRHR global ecosystem, both as a funder and as a diplomatic actor, is key to the long-term success and scale-up of this investment. The efforts of the Canadian Government to track and scale funding for the neglected areas sets an example of what a meaningful investment in SRHR infrastructure and accountability looks like. These investments can be a tool that prompts other donor governments to do the same, regulating disparities between donor countries' tracking mechanisms and ensuring sustainable funding to SRHR movements.

1 10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights Annual Report – 2020-2021: <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/global-health-sante-mondiale/global-health-rights-report-rapport-sante-droits.aspx?lang=eng>

2 Ibid

WHAT WE ARE WATCHING CLOSELY



Can Canada get to scale in the neglected areas?

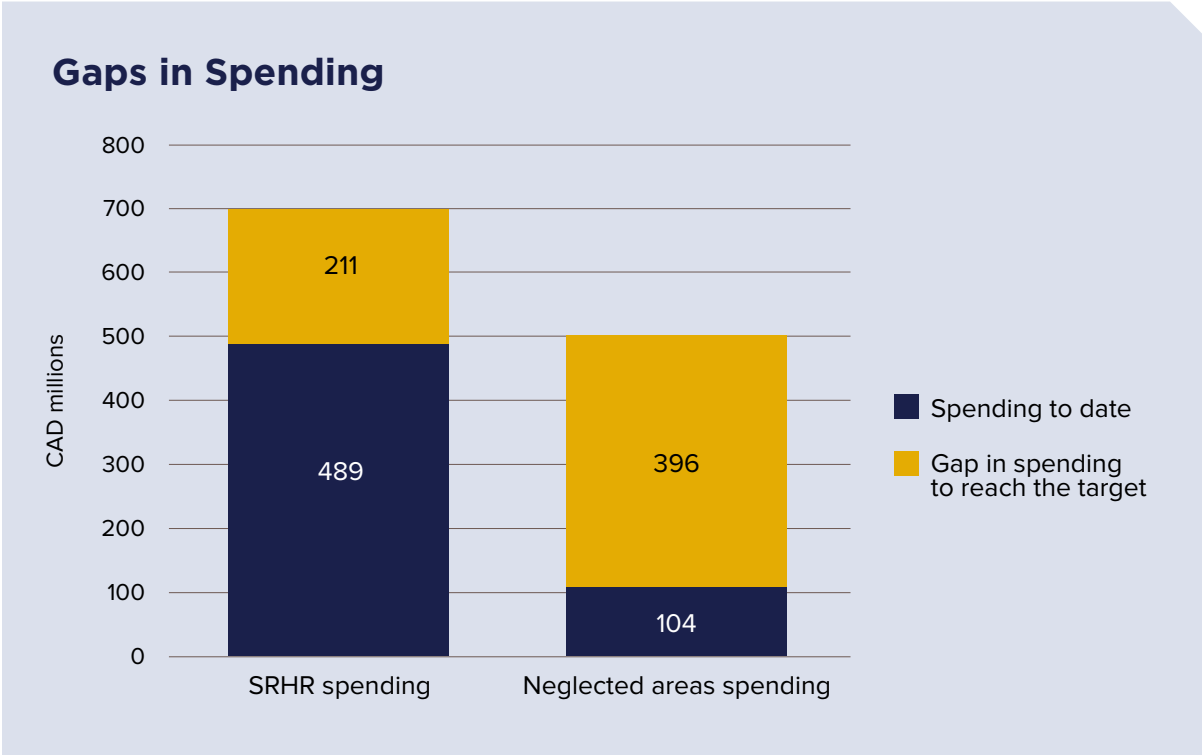
While Canada is close to meeting the broad spending commitment on SRHR, we have not come close to meeting the stated ambition of scaling up delivery in the neglected areas. Not only is there a need to increase overall investment in the neglected areas of SRHR (to reach \$500 million), but each specific area is also currently underfunded. In other words, there remain significant gaps in the percentage of funding currently being directed to the neglected areas and these gaps must be closed in order to realize the impact potential of this commitment.

The disproportionate focus on certain components of SRHR without a focus on these neglected areas leads to inequitable gains and lack of comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health services. Programming must build in a comprehensive approach to SRHR onto well-established reproductive maternal and newborn child health best practices in programming and must centre the work of the neglected areas in Canada’s portfolio.

In financial terms, \$489 million of the \$700 million dedicated to SRHR in 2020-2021 was spent. But of that only roughly \$104 million was allocated to programming in support of the neglected areas. The percentage of the commitment that is spent on neglected areas is far below what would be expected in the promise made by the Government.

Neglected area	Funds allocated in 10YC	Percentage of total SRHR commitment spent
Family planning	\$49 million	7.00%
SRHR advocacy and legal reform	\$47.3 million	6.75%
Comprehensive sexuality education	\$5.4 million	0.77%
Safe abortion services and post-abortion care	\$1.9 million	0.27%
Total	\$103.6 million	14.8%

These numbers signify that a meaningful focus on the neglected areas has not yet been reached. A meaningful focus would mean scaling up to at least \$500 million a year to the neglected areas (or over 70% of spending on SRHR). Meeting the overall scale-up target to reach 700 million per year in SRHR would require \$211 million in new investment over the 2021-2023 period. Even if this scale-up of new investment is directed solely to the neglected areas, Canada would still fall short of the target of \$500 million. Canada must increase funding for each neglected area without any reductions to the existing baselines.



Is Canada using the right delivery mechanisms?

Most of the funding in this period is being disbursed through multilateral organizations with much less through civil society organizations (69.6% and 25% respectively). Multilateral organizations play an essential role in delivering impact at scale and careful attention should be paid to how Canada can effectively influence key multilaterals to integrate comprehensive approaches to SRHR in their programming. Multilateral organizations also play an important role in shaping the global norms and standards in support of advancing SRHR and remain key partners in the global advancement of rights. At the same time, we need to ensure that the best mechanisms are being used to deliver on the full commitment and the various forms of programming required.

Localization is critical to ensuring programs and solutions are responsive, innovative, and leveraging the expertise and voices of individuals most acutely affected by lack of access to sexual and reproductive rights and services. In some of the neglected areas, multilaterals will not be the best choice to implement programming. The support for advocacy as a neglected area of SRHR programming, for example, will require support to civil society and feminist and women's rights organizations, enabling them to claim and exercise rights and address discriminatory legal and policy barriers. Localization recognizes the importance of local actors in leading and designing solutions that impact their own communities and their own national contexts. For SRHR leaders in the Global South, localization is critical to move towards an approach grounded in communities. We will continue to monitor not only what Canada is spending its money on but also the mechanisms being used to deliver the funds.

Is Canada doing enough with its advocacy?

The commitment to SRHR and the neglected areas is about more than funding for SRHR. The strength of the commitment lies in how much Canada can leverage that investment to impact the SRHR donor landscape. To have real impact, Canada needs to become a bolder, more visible leader in the international fora. The Canadian Government must participate as a vocal champion in international fora and seize its diplomatic position to serve as an influential actor in the fight to protect and advance SRHR. Echoing previous recommendations from the FPI, Canada should take on new global leadership opportunities and ensure that critical support remains for existing and successful SRHR global platforms to thrive. There may also be benefits from the development of Canadian SRHR champions and private sector leadership. Multiple [past reports from the FPI](#) provide further guidance and inspiration for this leadership.

CONCLUSION

Canada has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing a transformational and comprehensive SRHR agenda with the inaugural annual report on spending towards Canada's 10YC to women and children's global health and rights. GAC has set an important precedent for collaboration with civil society to monitor, reflect on, and improve the delivery of the commitment. Advancing SRHR requires collaboration across sectors and impactful, inclusive strategies that hold us all to account.

To ensure that Canada remains on track to delivering on our ambition, we recommend that:

- » Canada makes concrete investments to scale up to \$500 million per year in the neglected areas of SRHR by the end of 2023;
- » GAC develops a forecasted investment plan to ensure scale-up remains on track and increases are spread across the neglected areas of SRHR; and
- » Canada takes a more active global leadership role to promote the advancement of SRHR through international relations, including foreign affairs, global health fora, and through the future G7 Presidency.



FUTURE PLANNING INITIATIVE

ADVOCATING FOR CANADIAN LEADERSHIP ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Scaling Up Ambition: Future Planning Initiative Response to the Government of Canada's Annual Report on its 10-Year Commitment to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Spending

Prepared by Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights on behalf of the Future Planning Initiative.

The Future Planning Initiative is a coalition of six Canadian civil society organizations working globally and domestically to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. Member organizations include: Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health, Cooperation Canada, Inter Pares, Global Canada and Oxfam Canada.

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights gratefully acknowledges the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin nation where Action Canada's central office is located. Action Canada team members live, work, and organize on the unsundered and treaty territories of many Indigenous nations; nations who have, and continue to, steward the land known as Canada from time immemorial. It is vital that we centre our work towards reproductive justice in reconciliation and decolonization.

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