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The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
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August 31, 2020

RE: Canada's International Climate Finance

Dear Ministers,

I am writing today to share my feedback regarding Canada's international climate finance contributions post-2020-21. Thank you for this consultation opportunity.

In June, the Green Party of Canada released "Reimagining our Future," a comprehensive blueprint to propel Canada towards becoming a green society and the international leader we espouse to be. For my submission, I will draw on this document, as well as CARE Canada's submission – among others – as primary resources.

Canada is one of the richest countries in the world. We have a strong democracy, low corruption, and consistently rank high on various world reports. However, environmentally, we are not the global leader we ought to be – we are not pulling our weight.

Canada's former international climate finance commitment of \$2.65 billion from 2015-2020 was insufficient. It is to everyone's benefit – Canada's included – to substantially ramp up our international climate finance commitment. I echo CARE Canada's calls for the minimum



required contribution to increase to \$6.76 billion over the next five years. And that amount is the absolute bare minimum of our necessary contribution.

Below, I detail the specific focus areas where I encourage our government to direct its funding.

Indigenous peoples

As the effects of climate change become more severe, marginalized communities, and in particular Indigenous communities, will face some of the greatest challenges in the world. CARE Canada notes that Indigenous peoples are often highly dependent on natural resources. For these reasons, Canada must direct a substantial portion of its international climate finance contribution to Indigenous peoples abroad.

This is not only necessary to rectify the injustices that Indigenous peoples have faced since colonization, but also for the traditional ecological knowledge they can bring to the table. In our fight against climate change, we must listen to and include Indigenous peoples. They have information and an understanding of the climate and the environment that is useful to everyone.

There are so many organizations doing good work to support and build up Indigenous communities internationally. In Victoria, a grassroots organization called Mosqoy is empowering rural Quechua populations in Peru through sustainable textile production. This is just one example of the many organizations out there working to build resilience among Indigenous peoples who are experiencing the negative effects of globalization and climate change.

Private sector

For too long, the private sector has ruled nationally and internationally. Rather than the government, and those who elected them, making the decisions, private corporations have far too much control over elected governments, wreaking havoc especially in the Global South.

During COVID-19, the Canadian government has taken over once more, and it's been refreshing to see the private sector mobilize under the guidance of the federal government for the benefit of all Canadians.

When mobilized correctly and for the right reasons, the private sector can serve as an excellent resource for aiding the implementation of policies in times of crisis, as highlighted by CARE Canada.

However, when employing the private sector, great caution must be taken for accountability and transparency, and the public sector must always be prioritized. As we've learned far too recently, employing the private sector often leads to conflicts of interest.

Gender equality

There is ample evidence linking positive environmental outcomes with gender equality. In 2016, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) released a report that highlighted numerous



advantages to adopting gender-responsive policies. These advantages include longer-lasting and more transformation environmental interventions, improved food security, and more sustainable use of natural resources.

One example the 2016 report draws on is supporting gender equality in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Ministers, I strongly recommend this report to you, and to heed UNEP's advice when deciding on where to spend your international climate financing budget.

In addition, CARE Canada calls on our government to fall in line with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, and ensure a minimum of 15% of our international climate finance budget goes toward gender equality as its principal objective. I support both of these policy suggestions.

Agriculture

Agriculture has a massive carbon footprint. In recent years, modern agriculture technologies are emerging to address this issue, and there is so much potential for change through modern agricultural practices. Not only are many of these practices more sustainable, they are also far more profitable.

I encourage the government to examine funding of climate-smart agriculture technologies, including keyhole gardens, perma gardens, water harvesting, and regenerative agriculture.

In addition, to echo CARE Canada's recommendation, we must support smallholder agriculture, as this intersects with gender equality – smallholder agriculture is largely dominated by women.

Just as "Reimagining our Future" recommends supporting a "grow local" mentality in Canada, Canada's international climate financing must support local agricultural practices – for local use. This caveat is essential for the purposes of building resilient, sustainable, environmentally-conscious communities.

From loans to grants: Equalizing the ratio

Currently, Canada's contributions for international climate finance are approximately 70% in the form of loans compared to 30% in the form of grants.

The Copenhagen Conference, COP 15 in 2009, at which the pledge to provide \$100 billion/ year in climate finance was originally launched was specifically to be in new money, non-concessional and not to be provided as loans.

We know that loans are unsustainable. LDC's cannot pay them back and the interest that accrues spirals these countries into deeper debt and a worsened economic situation.

We should be moving towards equalizing this ratio, so that our contributions are closer to 50:50 loans and grants. Without this essential step, our financing commitment does not meet the



pledge we made in 2009, and may prove a detriment of some of the poorest countries in the world.



Business as usual has not been working for a long time, and the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored this fact dramatically.

If we think the effects we are seeing now from climate change, COVID-19, and the intersection of these two crises is bad, it's about to get infinitely worse. As CARE Canada cites, climate change could push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030, force up to 250 million people from their homes by 2050, and expose three billion people to Saharan heat levels by 2070.

The climate crisis means a refugee crisis, a food crisis, a health crisis, and an economic crisis. Even if we were to ever become perfect climate leaders in Canada (we have a long way to go in that regard), the climate crisis ignores borders, and we will be affected no matter what.

The slow reopening of the economy post-COVID-19 serves as an opportunity for Canada to become a leader, both within its own borders and on a global scale. We've seen how the government can scale up when necessary – now it's time to apply that same sense of urgency to the climate crisis.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact my office to discuss these matters further. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands
Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada

