

October 4, 2022

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Sean Fraser
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Confederation Building, Suite 110
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca, Minister@cic.gc.ca

Cc: Migrant Rights Network - info@migrantrights.ca

RE: Permanent Residence for All

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, we work to achieve systemic change. We support women, girls, and gender-diverse people to move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership. Since 1991, our partners and donors have contributed more than \$150 million to fund over 2,500 life-transforming programs throughout the country.

We welcome the federal government's commitment to regularizing undocumented workers and expanding permanent residency to students and migrant workers, including care workers and agricultural workers. Affirming the rights of undocumented and precarious status migrants through a such a program would be historic and transformational. The Canadian Women's Foundation fully supports a broad regularization program that includes *all* precarious status migrants, including the estimated 500,000 undocumented people in Canada.

Undocumented and precarious status migrants are part of our communities. They live, work, and study here. They provide essential labour in almost all sectors - manufacturing, agriculture, food services and hospitality, and essential care work. Yet they are made invisible and experience discrimination, racism, exploitation, and violence with little recourse due to their precarious status in Canada, employer-tied visas, and harmful practices of immigration detention and deportation.

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For precarious status migrant women and gender diverse people, many of whom are racialized, these experiences are particularly acute. For decades, live-in care workers with temporary, employer-tied visas have reported wage theft, sexual harassment, and even the withholding of food and the failure to provide safe and clean accommodations. The conditions of their visas are the primary barrier to their capacity to access safety and support services. Permanent residency would disrupt the exploitative employer-employee power dynamic and remove a critical barrier to migrant women's capacity to live in safety and access their rights.

Undocumented women and gender diverse people live in constant fear. They are denied basic human and labour rights, healthcare, and education. As such, they are highly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, and are unable to speak up against the racism, discrimination, exploitation, and violence they experience. The situation is dire and urgent.

We encourage the federal government to implement the recommendations in the comprehensive regularization proposals from [Migrants Rights Network](#) and the [Canadian Council for Refugees](#), who together represent a broad constituency of migrants in Canada, many of whom are disenfranchised due to their immigration status and are unable to vote or safely organize to advocate for their rights.

The Canadian Women's Foundation calls on the government to build on its feminist commitments to equality, fighting racism, and welcoming immigrants and refugees. We urge you to be ambitious in developing an inclusive and comprehensive regularization program for *all* precarious status and undocumented migrants in Canada, with protections to ensure their safety and dignity.

Sincerely,

Paulette Senior
President & CEO, Canadian Women's Foundation