



August 30, 2022

**The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau**  
Prime Minister of Canada

**The Honourable Sean Fraser**  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Confederation Building, Suite 110

**RE: Permanent Residence for All Through An Inclusive Regularization Program**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Québec, with our network and supporter base of 246,000 people across Canada, has been advocating for an inclusive and feminist response to the pandemic over the past two and a half years. We commend your leadership in recognizing that COVID-19 has laid bare existing inequalities within our society and requires targeted action. The policy choices and investments your Government has made, such as establishing an inclusive early learning and childcare system, demonstrate a commitment to tackling systemic inequalities to create a more equitable country.

We are pleased to see your Government take steps to support migrant workers by creating a “regularization program” as outlined in the Mandate Letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and asking the Immigration Minister to create a plan to give permanent residency to workers of all skill-levels. We hope your Government takes this opportunity to establish a “regularization program” that is as inclusive and accessible as possible. This would involve the regularization of all undocumented people without exception and permanent residence for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs. In this, we encourage you to bring women’s voices and solutions to the forefront.

Plus de 500 000 personnes, y compris des familles, vivent au Canada sans permis d'immigration valide et ce nombre est en augmentation. En outre, 1,2 million de personnes sont titulaires d'un permis de travail, d'études ou de demandeur d'asile, et la plupart d'entre elles n'ont pas la possibilité de rester de façon permanente au Canada. Le statut de résident permanent est le mécanisme par lequel les personnes migrantes peuvent accéder à des droits. Sans droits, trop de personnes sans papiers, de travailleur.euse.s migrant.e.s et de personnes réfugiées sont exploitées dans des conditions de travail inférieures aux normes. En l'absence de statut de résident permanent, il est difficile, voire impossible, pour les personnes migrantes de défendre leurs droits ou d'accéder à des services, y compris ceux auxquels elles pourraient être admissibles, par crainte de représailles, de licenciement, d'expulsion et de déportation. Les personnes migrantes connaissent des situations de logements précaires, des abus au travail, la pauvreté et la peur.

L'heure est au choix politique. Au lieu de créer un programme partiel et réduit qui donnera des droits à certaines personnes sans-papiers répondant à certains critères et travaillant dans des secteurs spécifiques, votre gouvernement devrait profiter de ce moment pour offrir des droits égaux pour toutes et tous et étendre la résidence permanente aux 1,7 millions de personnes migrantes, dont 500 000 sans-papiers, qui vivent



aujourd'hui au Canada. Les organisations de défense des droits des femmes et les leaders féministes de tout le pays peuvent fournir des recommandations concrètes pour jeter les bases d'un programme de régularisation transformateur de genre qui tienne compte de l'expérience unique des femmes et des travailleur.euse.s migrant.e.s de genre différent au Canada. Qui plus est, cette action envers les personnes migrantes représenterait aussi une prise de responsabilité du Canada pour les dommages climatiques causés par notre pays, un des plus grands émetteurs de gaz à effet de serre du monde, et envers les personnes déplacées suite aux conséquences des dérèglements climatiques. Ces personnes migrantes sauront par ailleurs partager avec les communautés d'ici leurs compétences en adaptation et résilience.

As your Government has acknowledged, the economic downturn caused by this pandemic has disproportionately impacted women. The underlying conditions of economic inequality such as low wages, precarious employment, and a lack of protection in women-majority fields (retail and service roles, the care sector, and the non-profit sector) have contributed to challenging employment conditions for women concentrated in essential occupations on the frontlines of the pandemic. It is no coincidence that racialized women, new Canadians, and migrant workers are overrepresented in these jobs. Through regularization, migrant women workers will have the opportunity to access better social services to alleviate poverty (like the Canada Child Benefit and ELCC programs) in addition to negotiating and accessing better working conditions and employment opportunities. This program could be a silver bullet to address major inequalities in Canada, while taking steps to close the gender gap in the economy.

COVID-19 has forever changed the world and we know we have a long way to go to address the impacts. But it is also a time to envision and lay the ground for a future that is more equal, sustainable and inclusive for all. Your Government has done much to champion gender equality, fight racism, and welcome new immigrant and refugees during these years. Now is the time to take another step by implementing a comprehensive regularization program instead of a partial or exclusionary one. We endorse the recommendations of our partners at the Migrant Rights Network who have outlined detailed principles for what an inclusive regularization program should entail (attached). This includes developing a simple yet broad program, creating a clear and simple application process, no exclusions or inadmissibility, no detentions and deportation, and building a comprehensive communications strategy.

We wish to support this effort and request a meeting to discuss opportunities for helping your Government champion this program in a feminist and gender-transformative way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lauren Ravon".

Lauren Ravon  
Executive Director, Oxfam Canada

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Denise Byrnes".

Denise Byrnes  
Directrice générale, Oxfam-Québec