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Global Affairs Canada pledges \$7 million to support Pan-African Women's Voice and Leadership initiatives

The African Women's Development Fund is the second women's fund selected as an implementing agency for Canada's Women's Voice and Leadership initiative.

(OTTAWA, August 14, 2018). Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI) and The MATCH International Women's Fund (The MATCH Fund) welcome today's announcement by the Minister of International Development, The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau in Freetown, Sierra Leone, committing \$7 million over five years to the [African Women's Development Fund \(AWDF\)](#).

The *Shaping our Futures: African Women's Voice and Leadership* project will increase the effectiveness of regional, national and sub-national women's rights platforms, networks and alliances to affect gender transformative policy change and implementation.

"African women's rights organizations are at the forefront of social, economic and political transformation on the continent, said Theo Sowa, AWDF's CEO. "We're delighted to be working with Global Affairs Canada as a partner in its Women's Voice and Leadership initiative."

AWDF's mission is to mobilize financial, human and material resources to support initiatives for transformation led by African women, women's rights organizations and African women's movements. Specifically, AWDF's grantmaking ensures that resources reach the hundreds of African women's organizations that are working in diverse ways to improve the lives of women and their communities. Based out of Accra, Ghana, AWDF works with women's rights organizations across the African continent.

Today's announcement in Sierra Leone is part of Canada's \$150 million envelope earmarked for the Women's Voice and Leadership initiative, created specifically to support women's rights organizations and movements globally. In July, Minister Bibeau announced \$5 million in support of the Ukrainian Women's Fund during her visit in Kiev.

"At the heart of a true feminist foreign policy is genuine backing for the leadership of local women and meaningful support for their initiatives and agendas," said Rachel Vincent, Director of Advocacy and Media for Nobel Women's Initiative. "This

announcement is an important start in supporting sustainable change that advances women's rights, and we hope to see more in the near future."

"We have pushed for women's funds - such as AWDF - to implement the Women's Voice and Leadership initiative, so we are very pleased by this announcement," said Beth Woroniuk, Policy Lead for The MATCH Fund. "Providing innovative, flexible and creative grantmaking to women's organizations is what will make a difference in delivering on the goals in Canada's feminist international assistance policy."

NWI and The MATCH Fund look forward to additional Women's Voice and Leadership announcements in the coming months and hope to see more women's organizations and funds as implementing organizations.

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[The Nobel Women's Initiative](#) brings together six women Nobel peace laureates—Shirin Ebadi (Iran), Tawakkol Karman (Yemen), Mairead Maguire (Northern Ireland), Jody Williams (U.S.), Leymah Gbowee (Liberia) and Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala)—to amplify the voices and analysis of women human rights defenders and peace builders around the globe. [@NobelWomen](#)

[The MATCH International Women's Fund](#) is Canada's only global fund for women, girls, and trans* people. Working at the intersection of women's rights and innovation, The MATCH Fund provides direct financial support to grassroots women's rights organizations in the global South. We fund creative and courageous women to dismantle barriers, challenge perceptions, and change the world for women and girls.

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