

The Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations

Vancouver, British Columbia - November 15, 2017

Through our feminist foreign policy, Canada is demonstrating its deep commitment to advancing

meaningful involvement in peace operations and the achievement of long-term, sustainable peace. The resolution set targets to double the current rate of women's participation of 3.7 percent of military peacekeepers and 9.5 percent of police peacekeepers by 2020. However, despite broad agreement that their increased participation would contribute to the effectiveness of UN peace operations, the percentage of women deployed in uniform has only increased by 0.2 percent. That is why Canada will launch the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations.

Canada will work with the UN and interested member states to develop innovative approaches to overcome the barriers to women's meaningful participation in peace operations. Canada will pilot these approaches with a small number of countries that share Canada's ambition.

The Elsie Initiative will:

- Support the development of a systematic approach to deploy more women in peace operations.
- Design tailored technical assistance support for countries that contribute peacekeepers to ensure the right conditions are in place for the deployment of women.
- Provide assistance to designated UN missions to improve their ability to support and benefit from women's increased participation in peace operations. Canada will provide \$6 million toward this goal.
- Launch a global fund to support the deployment of women peacekeepers. Canada will provide \$15 million to establish this fund.
- Monitor and evaluate so the Elsie Initiative can be adjusted as needed and help build a solid base of evidence for the development of a more comprehensive approach that could be fully integrated within the UN peacekeeping system.

To improve operational effectiveness and advance UN peace operations reform, Canada will also provide support that will help ensure women have access to a full range of training.

Who is Elsie?

The Elsie Initiative is named after Canadian women's rights pioneer Elsie MacGill (1905-1980). Born in Vancouver, Ms. MacGill graduated from the University of Toronto in 1927 and became the first Canadian woman to receive a degree in electrical engineering.

She was also the first woman to design aircraft and was in charge of the production of the Hawker Hurricane fighter at Canadian Car and Foundry, which employed 200 women during the Second World War.

Ms. MacGill overcame numerous challenges to achieve a lifetime of accomplishments. At 24 years old, she contracted a severe form of polio. She was a champion for women's rights and the rights of people with disabilities. She fought for their advancement, including through volunteering on ~~The Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations~~ of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. In addition, she was the Canadian representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

- Canada bolsters peacekeeping and civilian protection measures (</eng/news/2017/11/15/canada-bolsters-peacekeeping-and-civilian-protection-measures>)
 - Backgrounder: Canadian contributions to United Nations peace support operations (</eng/news/2017/11/15/canadian-contributions-united-nations-peace-support-operations>)
 - Backgrounder: [Canadian police support for international peace operations and missions](/eng/news/2017/11/15/canadian-police-support-international-peace-operations-and-missions) (</eng/news/2017/11/15/canadian-police-support-international-peace-operations-and-missions>)
 - Backgrounder: Women, peace and security (</eng/news/2017/11/15/women-peace-and-security>)
 - Backgrounder: Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (</eng/news/2017/11/15/vancouver-principles-peacekeeping-and-prevention-recruitment-and-use-child-soldiers>)
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