



Advocating for the human rights of older women
Défense des droits de la personne des femmes âgées

GRAN UPDATE May 2026

Save the Date! June 10th GRAN AGM

We look forward to welcoming GRAN members and supporters to our 12th Annual General Meeting via Zoom on **Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. ET**. This is a great opportunity to reflect on our busy year, celebrate our successes, and be grateful for the GRAN community we have built together. An invitation with a registration link will arrive in your inbox soon. Watch for it!

The WASH Campaign Gets Busy!

Lots has been happening on WASH for GRANs to get involved in. Here are some highlights:

Climate-Resilient WASH: For Earth Day we held a webinar on Climate-Resilient WASH with guest speaker Adnan Qader of WaterAid. Adnan spoke the increased pressure on water, sanitation, and hygiene caused by climate change and extreme weather events, and explained how climate-resilient WASH strategies can strengthen communities and build resilience in the face of climate change. A recording is available [here](#).

Action on WASH: We are asking all GRANs to contact your MPs to voice your concerns about access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene around the world. This is an opportunity to remind our MPs that Canadians do care about climate change, global health, and international aid. To make it easy for you to compose your message, we have put together a [page of talking points](#), which includes a specific “ask”. If you’ve not taken action yet, please do so. There is no time-limit on educating our MPs about this important issue!



Menstrual Hygiene Day: GRAN is marking Menstrual Hygiene Day by holding a learning event on **Wednesday, May 27 at 1:00 p.m. ET**. Our guest speaker, Adriane Franklin, Canada Director and Country Coordinator for [Days for Girls Canada](#), will talk about the work of Days for Girls around the world to eliminate stigma and address the limitations associated with menstruation so that women and girls have improved health, and access to education and livelihoods. [Click here](#) to register.



Days for Girls Canada wants to inspire Canadians to start the conversation about period poverty, menstrual equity, and menstrual health education. During the month of May they encourage us to paint our thumbnails red to help spark discussions and spread awareness. Consider getting out the nail polish, GRANs!

Baby Shower Time! Watch for a GRAN Action message coming in June with a toolkit of resources to support you in planning a baby shower information table over the summer and into the fall. Our hope is that that GRANs across the country will find opportunities to spread awareness of the lack of water in healthcare settings around the world and encourage members of the public to sign the [Time to Deliver petition](#) to be presented to world leaders at the UN Water Conference in December. We are giving you a heads-up now so you can be thinking about how, when, and where you might be able to set up a display. Baby shower-themed info tables could happen at community libraries, farmers' markets, outdoor festivals, parks, places of worship, anywhere people gather. A particularly effective and strategic option for GRAN groups in larger centres would be to apply to have a display table in the exhibit hall at a healthcare or faith-based conference happening in your city. (For example, the [Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses](#) are holding a conference in Calgary on October 1- 2 and the [Canadian Nurses Association](#) is meeting in Winnipeg from September 21 - 23. Might we be able to have a GRAN presence at these conferences to engage the allyship of Canada's nurses?)



**It's time to deliver clean water for every woman and every birth.
Change starts with water.**

Climate Justice *(Linda Kulkarni)*

Much has happened in the climate civil society space. **The First Conference for a Just Transition away from Fossil Fuels** was held in Santa Marta, Colombia in late April and was cause for renewed hope among climate justice advocates. The conference, co-hosted by Colombia and Norway, was attended by 57 countries, including Canada, who are willing to engage in developing a transition away from fossil fuels. This conference arose from discussion among members of the [Fossil Fuel Treaty](#) and was preceded by a People's Summit and the release of the [People's Declaration for a Rapid, Equitable, and Just Transition for a Fossil-Free Future](#), the outcome of months of work by civil society organizations, frontline communities, Indigenous Peoples, and others. The



Santa Marta Process Begins

Canadian delegate spoke to the connections between economic opportunities and climate action but didn't acknowledge the need to move away from dependence on fossil fuels. Next year's conference will be held in Tuvalu, co-hosted with Ireland. Here is a news release from [Climate Action Network Canada](#) with analysis and key outcomes of the Santa Marta conference, and a beautiful and stirring [3-minute video](#) produced by Tuvalu.

The **Federal Spring Economic Update** included the long-awaited pledge for international climate finance for the next five years. While the pledge of \$5.8 billion surpassed the last pledge of \$5.3, a significant portion (\$1.78B over three years) will be allocated to the Development Finance Institute Canada (FinDev). FinDev is a crown corporation whose role is to support international development through private sector investment in emerging markets with the goal of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Alongside our colleagues at the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D) we will be watching closely as this unfolds and will continue to advocate for climate adaptation financing, loss and damages, and grants versus loans. Read this statement from C4D: [Details will make or break Canada's new climate finance pledge.](#)

[Seniors for Climate's](#) new campaign, **Break Through the Climate Silence**, will have its kickoff during Environment Week June 1 - 7. While surveys show the majority of Canadians are concerned about climate change, conversations have largely disappeared, especially from political leaders and mainstream media. Climate silence is preventing climate action. Seniors for Climate is hosting events across the country to once again raise the conversation about the climate crisis. GRAN groups have participated in these events in recent years. [Here](#) is the link for information on the week of action and how to get involved.

Education Watch Group (*Phyllis Webster, Ann Frost, Hilda Young, Sharon Graham, Valerie Wright, Sharon Vanclief*)

GRAN, along with many other civil society organizations, recently signed a letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand urging the Government of Canada to support a proposed new international treaty to explicitly guarantee free pre-primary and free secondary school to every child.

The letter reads in part: "***The new [UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report](#) presents a sobering picture: while nearly 90 percent of the world's children now complete primary school, the out-of-school population has risen for the seventh year in a row, reaching 273 million. ... Children are also missing out on early childhood education, a critical phase of learning when children's brains are developing most quickly. Only 60 percent of primary school students have had at least one year of pre-primary education. ... Canada has a longstanding record of leadership in global education for girls, refugees and other marginalized people, so it is hoped that Canada will join 60 other countries in signing.***"



Photo courtesy of Education Cannot Wait

Global philanthropy and education leader Maysa Jalbout is the new director of [Education Cannot Wait](#), the global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises within the United Nations. Here are her reflections, [Hope Starts with Us](#), after one month in the position.

Health Watch Group (Cathy Thompson (co-chair), Sandra Stec (co-chair), Mary Spoke, Diane Scaletta, Sheila Pepper, Linda McFarlane)

Good news on vaccines:

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) has reported the development of vaccine microarray patches (MAPS) which should be able to overcome barriers in reaching remote areas. These vaccines are administered through the skin without needles or syringes and can be administered by community health workers or volunteers after a brief training session.



Photo courtesy of Yahoo/News

The WHO (World Health Organization) has approved the first malaria vaccine for babies. *Coartem Baby*, which can treat infants as small as 2kg (4.4lb), has already been used in Ghana. The cherry-flavoured tablets can be dissolved in liquids, including breast milk. Dr. Martin Fitchet, CEO of MMV (Medicines for Malaria Venture), said in *The Guardian* on May 2, “**For too long, newborns and young**

infants with malaria have fallen through the cracks because existing treatments were not designed with them in mind.” He called the WHO ruling “**a major public-health milestone.**”

Conflict and hunger in Sudan:

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme, and UNICEF are warning of the [deepening hunger crisis](#) taking place in Sudan and South Sudan. Conflict and displacement have led to decreased agricultural production, which means that 7.8 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity, and 2.2 million children between the ages of six months and five years suffer acute malnutrition. Access to life-saving treatment is difficult due to shortage of supplies and damaged facilities due to the conflict.

At The International Sudan Conference in Berlin on April 15, over one billion dollars in aid was pledged. Canada pledged over \$120 million CAD in new support, of which \$94 million will support food, healthcare, shelter, water, and sanitation. We thank the Canadian government for this pledge and encourage continued Canadian leadership on the world stage so this ongoing crisis is not forgotten. To learn more, watch this powerful webinar, [Live from South Sudan](#) with Andy Harrington, Executive Director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Consider signing [this petition](#) from ONE Canada, urging the Canadian government to use its global influence to push for an end to violence in Sudan and ensure lifesaving humanitarian assistance reaches those in need.

Mining Justice Watch Group (Liz Dill, Ann Young, Gaye-Frances Alexander, Diane Scaletta, Phyllis Webster, JoAnn Mulhern)

Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE)

“Canada must clamp down on corporate ties to ICE” Under this headline in an Op-ed published in the *Montreal Gazette* on May 6, Karen Hamilton, Aidan Gilchrist-Blackwood, and Amélie Nguyen spoke to the importance of accountability for human rights by Canadian companies and of the role of the Canadian government in holding them accountable. Specific examples they used include links to pension funds: **“These are not abstract relationships. They risk placing Canadian companies — and even Canadian pension holders, indirectly — in the chain of responsibility for actions that many human rights observers have condemned. Yet Canada has no binding legal framework for holding companies accountable for harms caused abroad.”**

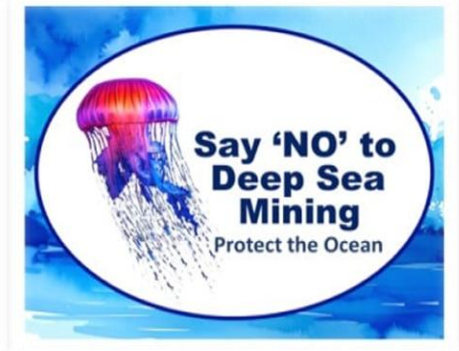


Thank you to all GRANs who signed [Petition e-7361](#) this past month calling for the Canadian government to immediately appoint a Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE). It is now closed for signatures, but, thanks in part to many of you, it reached 656 signatures, sufficient to require the Government to respond.

Ocean Week 2026, May 30 - June 8:

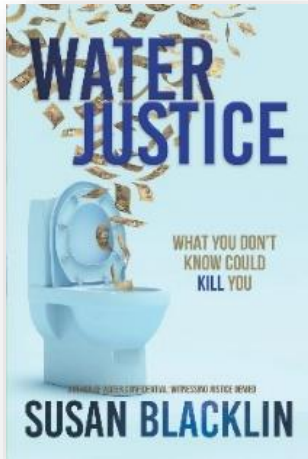
“We are in reach of a whole new relationship with the ocean, a wiser, more sustainable relationship. The choice lies with us.” -- David Attenborough

As we contemplate the words of David Attenborough and prepare for Ocean Week activities, the Mining Justice Group will once again participate in actions to create awareness around the risks that Deep Sea Mining (DSM) poses to the ocean and its ecosystems, the broader environmental impacts, and the potential effects on those who rely on the ocean for their livelihoods and their food sources. We will join with members of Victoria’s Mining Justice Action Committee to set up interactive educational displays at local markets and community venues throughout Greater Victoria. We’ll be having conversations and handing out information, including our bright new **“Say ‘NO’ to Deep Sea Mining”** jellyfish sticker to help spread the word.



The members of GRAN’s Mining Justice Watch Group are working on a petition calling on the Canadian government to take a strong leadership role in ensuring that other countries uphold the principles, rights, duties, and obligations as set out in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and are working with partners at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to ensure the protection and conservation of the global ocean through continued support for a moratorium on Deep Sea Mining.

Book Corner



British Columbia-based author Susan Blacklin's latest book, entitled [*Water Justice: What You Don't Know Could Kill You*](#), is a current account of issues threatening safe drinking water in Canada, highlighting the degree of government negligence surrounding both drinking water and source water protection. She is also the author of [*Water Confidential*](#), which details the long-standing water injustices in Canada and is now required reading in many Indigenous Studies programs in universities across the nation. A number of GRANs attended a recent webinar hosted by [National Council of Women of Canada](#), at which Susan Blacklin was the guest speaker. They recommend we watch her presentation. A recording is available here: [Crystal Clear or Clouded? Rethinking Clean Water in Canada](#).

Learning Event

Don't forget to join us on **Wednesday, May 27 at 1:00 p.m. ET** for a WASH-themed [GRAN learning event](#) to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day. [Click here](#) to register.

Actions

Actions on WASH:

1. **Write your MP:** If you've not done so yet, please write to your MP to voice your concerns about access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene around the world. You can find your MP's email address [here](#) and a sheet of talking points [here](#). Please either bcc or email us at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org to let us know which MP has been contacted.
2. **Sign and share** the [Time to Deliver petition](#), calling on world leaders to take concrete actions to deliver clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene for every woman, every birth. The goal is 100,000 signatures before the UN Water Conference in December. Begin thinking about how, when and where you might create a baby shower display to get the news out about the Time to Deliver campaign and petition.
3. **Sign** the National Council of Women of Canada's [Open Letter to the Prime Minister](#) advocating for safe drinking water and responsible water stewardship in Canada, backed by legally enforceable national drinking water regulations.

Action on hunger:

Sign ONE Canada's [petition](#), urging the Canadian government to use its global influence to push for an end to violence in Sudan and ensure lifesaving humanitarian assistance reaches those in need.