

PRESS RELEASE: CANADIAN PHILANTHROPY COMMITMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE OPENS FOR SIGNATURE

October 7, 2021 – A first-of-its-kind funder pledge, which calls on Canadian foundations and philanthropic actors to signal their commitment to act on climate change, has launched today.

The pledge, entitled “The Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change,” launches ahead of the annual UN climate conference, COP26, which opens in Glasgow, Scotland on November 1st, and aims to have 100 signatories by June 2022.

“COP26 gives us a rare moment and platform to demonstrate our leadership on climate while the world is watching. The Commitment is a crucial opportunity to catalyze ambition across our sector and for Canadian funders large and small to demonstrate they are ready to step up,” said Jean-Marc Mangin, President and CEO of Philanthropic Foundations Canada. “The climate crisis is already impacting our work as funders to advance equity, health, poverty eradication, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, human rights and all issues on which we strive to have a positive impact as philanthropic actors – and it will continue to complicate and exacerbate all issues and communities affected by them without action. There’s no time to waste.”

This is the first climate commitment to be coordinated by Canada’s largest funder networks.

The Commitment is a joint initiative of The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle), Community Foundations Canada (CFC), Environment Funders Canada (EFC), and Philanthropic Foundations Canada (PFC). It builds on a global movement of philanthropic actors committing to apply a climate lens to their work, coordinated by WINGS – #philanthropyforclimate. It paves the way for improved coordination and learning across large numbers of funders.

More than 35 Canadian funders, Indigenous leaders, and charitable organizations across Canada provided input into the development of the Canadian call to action, including those working in the fields of Indigenous rights, youth leadership, economic equality, gender equality, racial justice, health, and poverty eradication. The international pledge was developed in collaboration with a global task force of more than 40 foundations and associations from around the world.

The pledge calls on Canadian funders to recognize their fundamental obligations to Indigenous Peoples and to support the essential role of Indigenous rights, stewardship and sovereignty.

Kris Archie, CEO of The Circle, emphasized: “Indigenous leadership is fundamental to respond to the climate emergency. Our stewardship emerged at the beginning of time and centres language, rights and intergenerational responsibilities to all life, land, water and air. Today’s climate response has to uplift this wisdom and recognize Indigenous sovereignty.”

Most funding dollars in Canada do not currently go towards climate action. This pledge and the accompanying support materials aim to change that.

“To meet the environmental challenges we face, we need all of philanthropy to step up – not just environmental funders. A just and sustainable future will benefit all communities from coast to coast to coast,” said Andrew Chunilall, CEO of Community Foundations of Canada. “That is why we have come together as philanthropic associations to engage our sector to take action. When our networks join forces with a diversity of voices, we can have a bigger and more meaningful impact.”

The program will support signatories in implementing actions through resources and materials, access to educational opportunities with partners, and convening on specific issues, including, for example, evaluating grantmaking, auditing operations, or assessing endowments and assets.

Devika Shah, Executive Director of EFC, shared: “The global pandemic demonstrated that the philanthropic sector can step up and make bold changes with speed and scale in the face of a global crisis. Climate change is a defining crisis of our time and demands a whole-of-sector response.”

The Commitment is now open for signatures at:
philanthropyforclimate.ca and philanthropiepourleclimat.ca

For more information, please contact Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change National Coordinator, Marie-Marguerite Sabongui at msabongui@pfc.ca or 718-683-6323

About PFC: Created in 1999, Philanthropic Foundations Canada (PFC) is a national charitable organization that strengthens Canadian philanthropy in all its diversity and in its pursuit of a just, equitable and sustainable world. Over 130 grant-making organizations are members of PFC, collectively managing \$36 billion in assets. In 2018, PFC members made over \$841 million in grants and over \$393 million in foundation-managed charitable activities.

About EFC: Environment Funders Canada (EFC) is a membership organization comprised of funders inspired by a vision of an environmentally sound and sustainable Canada. The network strengthens the impact of philanthropy in support of that vision and represents private, public, community, and corporate foundations that share a desire to learn, collaborate, and leverage resources in pursuit of common priorities.

About CFC: Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) is the national leadership organization for Canada's 191 local community foundations. Together with community foundations across the country, we help drive local solutions for national change on the issues that matter most to Canadians. We're building a movement that connects community foundations, Canadians and partners to create a just, sustainable future.

About The Circle: The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle) works to mobilize the settler philanthropic sector to move funds to Indigenous-led projects, movements, organizations and nations.

