

## **News Release - For immediate release**

### **Canadian Prime Minister launches Sama-Sama project at UN: A CECI initiative advancing inclusive governance**

Montreal, September 24, 2025 – Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced at the United Nations General Assembly in New York the launch of the Sama-Sama project, a CECI initiative carried out with local partners CONCERN, PRO PUBLIC, Campaign Nepal, and Siddhartha Social Development Center. Running until 2028 in Nepal and the Philippines, the project seeks to strengthen civic engagement and advance the equitable representation of women and marginalized groups in democratic spaces.

“We have the resources the world needs and the values to which others aspire. At this hinge moment in history, Canada is leading with strength – creating new opportunities for Canadian workers and investing in peace, security, and reliable global partnerships to build a safer, more resilient, and more prosperous world for all.”

***The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada***

#### **Addressing systemic challenges**

In both countries, vulnerable communities continue to face structural barriers to exercising their rights and accessing essential services. For example, displaced populations often struggle to secure basic services, such as healthcare and education, while certain groups remain largely underrepresented in political processes due to ethnic or religious discrimination.

Recent events have further illustrated the fragility of civic space. In Nepal, mass protests in September denounced both new restrictions on social media and widespread concerns over corruption and inequality. In the Philippines, citizens also mobilized in large numbers to demand accountability after reports of massive irregularities in public infrastructure projects. These movements underscore the urgency of initiatives that foster dialogue, transparency, and greater accountability between governments and citizens.

The Sama-Sama project aims to address these challenges by fostering inclusive spaces and leadership opportunities. It will strengthen women’s and youth leadership through training programs and support women from marginalized groups who are already elected or appointed by facilitating their participation in national and international networks. It will also provide micro-grants to women’s rights and human rights organizations for advocacy initiatives, promote alliances among feminist and civil society groups to increase their influence, and support initiatives that enhance accountability and collaboration between citizens, civil society, and local authorities.

## **A shared commitment to gender equality and human rights**

Nearly 60,000 people will take part directly in the project, close to 60% of whom will be women and young women, many from historically excluded communities such as ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, and LGBTQI+ people. In addition, the project is expected to involve approximately 1,068,493 people indirectly.

The Sama-Sama project applies transformative approaches that challenge discriminatory norms, strengthen women's leadership, and promote equitable access to services, resources, and accountability mechanisms for women and people from marginalized groups.

The Sama-Sama project is implemented by CECI and its local partners CONCERN, PRO PUBLIC, Campaign Nepal, and Siddhartha Social Development Center, with financial support from Global Affairs Canada.

*For more information, please consult the Government of Canada news releases ([News release 1](#) and [News release 2](#)), as well as our [Sama-Sama project page](#).*

**About CECI:** Founded in 1958, CECI is an international cooperation organization advancing sustainable and inclusive development, with a strong focus on strengthening the leadership of women and girls.

**About CONCERN:** The Center for Emergency Aid, Rehabilitation and Development (CONCERN) Inc., founded in 1986 in the Philippines, is a people-based, development-oriented organization that works with vulnerable communities to reduce risks, strengthen resilience, and promote sustainable, locally driven solutions.

**About PRO PUBLIC:** Founded in 1991, PRO PUBLIC is a Nepal-based non-profit organization dedicated to public interest issues such as good governance, environmental and gender justice, conflict transformation, and strengthening accountability, working through advocacy, capacity building, research, and litigation.

**About Campaign Nepal:** Campaign Nepal for Research & Development, founded in 2008 and based in Madhesh Province, is a registered NGO working on community development and social justice, with a particular focus on marginalized groups such as children, youth, and women.

**About Siddhartha Social Development Center (SSDC):** Founded in 1995 in Kapilvastu, Nepal, SSDC is a non-profit organization that empowers marginalized and disadvantaged groups through programs in education, child rights, advocacy, and local capacity building.

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