

Office of the  
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Cabinet du  
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## **CANADA'S FORWARD STRATEGY SAVING EVERY WOMAN, EVERY CHILD: WITHIN ARM'S REACH**

Maternal, newborn and child health remains Canada's top international development priority and we are committed to working with Canadian and international partners toward the goal of ending the preventable deaths of mothers, newborn and children under the age of five.

As part of this effort, Canada has committed \$3.5 billion to improve the health of mothers and children for the period of 2015-2020. Building on Canada's 2010-2015 Muskoka Initiative, this funding will continue to target the most effective ways to reduce maternal and child deaths by prioritizing three programmatic areas: strengthening of health systems, improving nutrition, and reducing the burden of leading diseases. This represents an increase over Muskoka Initiative funding levels and will allow Canada to tackle emerging challenges, including greater emphasis on better reaching children in the fragile first month of life, stepping up immunization efforts and building civil registration and vital statistics systems to improve accountability for results and as a passport to a child's rights.

### **Maintaining geographic focus and emphasis on country-led solutions**

Canada will continue to focus on a select number of developing country partners and their efforts to strengthen the health systems needed to deliver high-impact health services across the continuum of care – from pre-pregnancy through to the age of five. Canada's investments will be tailored to specific country needs, and will prioritize those countries and issues where concrete results can be attained for the world's most vulnerable women and children. This will include working with our country partners to prioritize making progress on key interventions across the continuum of care to ensure safe childbirth and throughout the first 28 days of life, as a means of averting maternal deaths and preventing the death of newborn babies.

### **Reducing the burden of leading diseases**

Canada will also target its investments to ensure that mothers and children have access to the most effective life-saving vaccines and medicines, so that their lives are not cut short by preventable diseases and illnesses. The global reduction of child deaths from nearly 12 million to 6.6 million between 1990 and 2012 is due in large part to the scaling-up of essential vaccinations. Canada will build on its recent commitments to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and will work with the partners most proven to achieve results for women and children.

## **Improving nutrition**

Canada will also continue its global leadership on nutrition, which has emerged as a far more important factor in maternal and child mortality than had been originally appreciated. Through both its food security and MNCH partnerships, Canada will tackle under-nutrition, which contributes to 45 per cent of deaths of children below five years of age. This global problem requires global solutions, and a commitment to enhancing what works. That's why Canada will work with like-minded partners through the Scaling-Up Nutrition Movement to ensure that countries are able to deliver the package of integrated nutrition interventions that represents the best return on development investment.

## **Strengthening health systems and accountability**

The sustainability of both our investments and the health of women and children require strengthened and improved health systems and will thus remain a core component of Canada's approach. Working through national plans and priorities, Canada will continue to work with our country partners to fill system gaps by investing in improved service delivery at the local level, training more health workers, increasing access to adequately equipped local health facilities, and expanding access to services.

Accountability for results will also continue to underpin Canada's investments for mothers and children. Canada's partnership with the World Health Organization has already supported 70 countries in developing concrete plans to improve their national accountability systems. A critical next step will be supporting country partners' efforts to collect timely and relevant data for planning and decision making. To accomplish this, Canada will work with partners like the World Bank, UNICEF and the World Health Organization to advance a global effort in support of country partners' efforts to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems. These systems provide the foundation for all aspects of our development efforts and will amplify other investments for women and children by improving the delivery of health services, providing national documentation to help secure and safeguard an individual's rights, and allowing for participation in the democratic process and the economy.

## **Partnerships**

In order to achieve our collective objectives, we will deepen and expand existing and new partnerships. In recognition of their wealth of expertise, Canadian civil society, academic, and private sector organizations will play a critical role in shaping and delivering on our commitment. Consultations will be held with Canadian and international experts and our partner countries to inform these new investments. A call for proposals will be launched in September 2014 in support of Canadian partners' work to save the lives of mothers and children in developing countries. The Government of Canada also re-commits to working hand-in-hand with the Canadian Network for Maternal Newborn and Child Health, who represent the country's best and brightest in saving the lives of women and children. Together, we will continue to champion the issues that can make a real difference in the lives of women and children around the world.

## **Beyond 2015**

The Millennium Development Goals have catalyzed significant global attention on the need to improve maternal health and reduce child mortality. While there has been remarkable progress in recent years, we have not yet reached our goal, but it's within arm's reach. Canada remains committed to seeing through the promise it made to the world's women and children through the Muskoka Initiative, and will push to ensure that MNCH features prominently in the post-2015 development agenda. This agenda has the potential to be the voice for the world's most vulnerable citizens and Canada will advocate for it to remain focused and measurable, to ensure that it mobilizes concrete action to reduce poverty and improve the lives of women and children.