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PMNCH Applauds Canada in Prioritizing Maternal and Child Health at 2010 G8

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health is delighted to welcome the announcement by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper that Canada, as host of this year’s G8 meeting, has named maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) as the top priority for the 2010 meeting, to be held in Toronto in late June.

In a 26 January statement published in *The Toronto Star*, Mr. Harper said that Canada will "champion a major initiative to improve the health of women and children in the world's poorest regions", making MNCH "the top priority" for the G8 meeting, to be held together with the G20 meeting during 25-27 June. "Setting a global agenda for improving maternal and child health is an ambitious plan. But working with other nations and aid agencies on the ground where need is greatest makes it an achievable goal," wrote Mr. Harper. No details were released about additional investment by Canada in MNCH.

"We are delighted to welcome this initiative by the Canadian Prime Minister" said PMNCH Director Dr. Flavia Bustreo. "As the G8 host country this year, Canada is a crucial ally in making the case for greater investment and political commitment to saving the lives of women and children. We now look forward to concrete financial commitments from Mr. Harper to support this initiative. For our part, we look forward to redoubling efforts in urging all governments to follow Canada's lead. Greater progress must be made in achieving the health Millennium Development Goals, particularly for women and children."

"Canada can be proud of the role it has played in the Catalytic Initiative to Save a Million Lives and its investments in this area, particularly in the areas of child health and nutrition," said Dr. Dorothy Shaw, The Partnership's Canadian G8-G20 Spokesperson and Past-President of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). "Now is the time to step up efforts to improve attention to maternal and newborn health in particular, and to underline the critical connection between healthy mothers and healthy children."

The Partnership has long been a leading advocate for greater Canadian and G8 engagement in addressing maternal and child health. In June 2009, Partnership members were instrumental in moving an all-party resolution in the Canadian House of Commons to support greater attention to maternal and child health. At the 2009 G8 meeting in L'Aquila, Italy, the Partnership was delighted to welcome a strong reference to the MNCH Consensus in the final outcome statement. Most recently, in December 2009, The Partnership, led by its Ottawa-based board member Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), hosted a successful breakfast briefing on MNCH for members of Parliament.

Greater investment in maternal, newborn and child health remains a critical need for advancing progress and achieving the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Consensus for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health calls for an additional $30 billion to achieve MDGs 4 and 5, as marked by the reduction of child deaths by two-thirds and maternal deaths by three-quarters by 2015. ([http://www.who.int/pmnch/topics/maternal/consensus_12_09.pdf](http://www.who.int/pmnch/topics/maternal/consensus_12_09.pdf)).
The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health is an alliance of more than 300 governments, donors, UN agencies, health professional associations, civil society groups and academic and research institutions dedicated to advancing progress in reducing maternal and child mortality. Formed in 2005, it is based at the World Health Organization in Geneva and is currently chaired by the World Bank.