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CANADA CONTINUES TO LEAD THE WORLD ON MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces new commitment towards Canada’s top development priority: saving the lives of millions of mothers and children

May 29, 2014  Toronto, Ontario  Prime Minister’s Office

Introduction

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced Canada’s renewed resolve to galvanize global action toward saving the lives of millions of mothers, newborns and children in some of the world’s poorest countries. The announcement was made at the Saving Every Woman, Every Child: Within Arm’s Reach Summit. The Summit has provided an opportunity for Canadian and international partners to chart a course towards continued, tangible results on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) beyond 2015.

The world has made tremendous progress since 2010 when Canada brought this critical issue to the forefront of the world’s attention. As a result of global efforts, maternal mortality rates are declining and millions more children are celebrating their fifth birthday. Important lessons have also been learned, which is why Canada is continuing to call for political leadership, sustained financial commitments, robust accountability measures and a renewed focus on the approaches that are proven to save the lives of women and children.

We are at a critical time to take next steps and renew our commitment to the maternal, newborn and child agenda, specifically:

Maintaining geographic focus and emphasis on country-led solutions: Canada will continue to focus on a select number of developing country partners. Investments will ensure that women enjoy safe and healthy pregnancies, and will bolster health systems so that children and their mothers have access to high-impact health services across the continuum of care – from pre-pregnancy through to the age of five.

Reducing the burden of leading diseases: The scaling-up of essential vaccinations has cut the number of child deaths nearly in half since 1990. Canada will continue to direct investment 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.

**Improving nutrition:** Under-nutrition contributes to close to half of the deaths of children under the age of five. Canada will continue its global leadership on nutrition, working with like-minded partners to ensure that countries can provide nutrition interventions that work.

**Strengthening health systems and accountability:** Canada will continue to work with our country partners to fill system gaps by investing in improved service delivery at the local level, by training more health workers, increasing access to adequately equipped local health facilities, and expanding access to services. Canada will also work to help country partners strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems. These are essential to children benefiting from all services their country has to offer. It also enables them to participate fully in the democratic process.

**Partnerships:** In order to achieve its maternal, newborn and child health objectives, Canada will expand existing partnerships and initiate innovative new ones, among civil society, academic, and private sector organizations, who will play a critical role in shaping and delivering on Canada’s top development priority. The Government will continue its productive collaboration with the Canadian Network for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and actively engage the Canadian public. Consultations will be held with key Canadian civil society, academic and private sector organizations.

**Beyond 2015:** 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 global post-2015 development agenda.

**Quick Facts**

- There is solid international progress being made to address maternal, newborn and child health. The number of women who die each year during pregnancy or childbirth has dropped substantially – from 523,000 deaths in 1990 to 289,000 in 2013.
- The global number of deaths of children under the age of five has dropped significantly as well, from nearly 12 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012.
- Canada is hosting the *Saving Every Woman, Every Child: Within Arm’s Reach* Summit in Toronto, Ontario, from May 28 to 30, 2014.
- The Summit brings together Canadian and international leaders, experts, civil society, businesses, academia, developed and developing countries, international organizations and philanthropic foundations to ensure that maternal, newborn and child health remains a core part of the global development agenda.

**Quotes**

“We have come to a pivotal moment in global efforts to save the lives of women and children in developing countries. While the world has significantly reduced the number of preventable deaths and learned valuable lessons since Muskoka, we need
to finish what we started and sustain global momentum to 2015 and beyond. We have, within arm’s reach, the power to end the preventable deaths of women and children in the developing world. Together, we hold these precious lives in our hands. We have the responsibility to make renewed commitments and live up to them.” – Prime Minister Stephen Harper

“There is a moral imperative to saving the lives of vulnerable women and children in some of the poorest countries around the world when it is in our power to do so. It is unacceptable that these vulnerable global citizens die from preventable causes which can be addressed with proven, affordable and cost effective solutions – some costing mere pennies.” – Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Related Products

- Improving the Lives of Women and Children: Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
- Saving Every Woman, Every Child: Within Arm’s Reach

Associated Link

- www.canada.ca/MNCH

Contacts

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