



December 9, 2020

Helga Fogstad

PMNCH Executive Director
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Switzerland

Joshua Tabah

*Director General,
Health and Nutrition*
111 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Canada

PMNCH Call to Action - Commitment to protect the progress for women, children and adolescents' health

Dear Ms. Fogstad,

On behalf of the Government of Canada we commit to the challenge of protecting the health and rights of women, children and adolescents everywhere through the PMNCH COVID-19 Call to Action.

We reaffirm our commitments to achieve Universal Health Coverage through improved primary healthcare and pledge to take action that will arrest and reverse the risks to women's, children and adolescents' health and well-being during the COVID-19 response and recovery, leaving no one behind.

Canada's international assistance response to COVID-19 has been consistent with the policy priorities and principles outlined in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. This includes placing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the centre of our development and humanitarian assistance efforts.

Since February, 11, 2020, the Government of Canada has announced commitments of more than \$1.1 billion to the global response to COVID19. An additional \$1 billion has also been made available for International Monetary Funds related to COVID-19.

Canada has invested over \$380 million towards equitable, timely, and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatments. These investments will help governments roll out their vaccination plans to ensure no one is left behind.

Equitable access to vaccines, testing and treatments is a top priority for this government. Canada has been a leader of the global, collaborative effort through the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to help ensure affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments for people around the world.

Going forward, the Government of Canada is committed to:

- Supporting an equity-based and gender-responsive approach as the only way forward to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, while addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on the delivery of essential services for mothers, children and adolescents.



- Addressing gender barriers to accessing health systems so as to realize the right to the highest attainable standard of health, to ensure universal access to SRHR, and to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and gender-based violence, and achieve the SDGs.
- Working to ensure that international partners can maintain their services for vulnerable populations where possible, including support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternal and child health, food security and nutrition, education, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and programs aimed at combating gender-based violence.
- Working to ensure that progress in protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, including bodily autonomy, does not get lost in our response. New projects have been initiated to respond to the crisis, including a further \$30M of Canada's COVID-19 response that will be dedicated to SRHR and preventing GBV.
- Investing in new international aid to ensure that women and girls around the world continue to have access to safe abortions and reproductive health services despite restrictions due to COVID-19.
- Continuing to strengthen SHRH investments, from a total of over \$500 million in 2019-2020 to \$700 million in 2023/2024, as part of the government's \$1.4 billion 10-year commitment to global health.
- Ensuring that reproductive health commodities reach women and girls, wherever they are by co-hosting the launch of the UNFPA Supplies Partnership (2021-2030) on December 14, 2020.
- Bringing new voices into the discussion about SRHR and supporting youth to participate meaningfully in discussions about their bodies, their lives and their futures.
- Continuing to demonstrate strong leadership in nutrition by co-hosting a kick-off event for Nutrition for Growth on December 14, 2020. The event will serve as the launch of a Nutrition for Growth Year of Action, with other high-level commitment-making moments taking place on the road to the N4G Summit in December 2021.

The Government of Canada strongly supports the COVID-19 Call to Action of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and we will continue working to ensure that international partners can maintain their services for vulnerable populations where possible, including support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternal and child health, food security and nutrition, education, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and programs aimed at combating gender-based violence.

Sincerely,

Joshua Tabah

Director General, Health and Nutrition