

Getting Women and Children on the 2010 G8/G20 Agenda

OTTAWA, November 30, 2009 – When G8/G20 world leaders convene in Canada in 2010, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) wants them to remember the millions of women and children around the world who die during pregnancy, childbirth or childhood from lack of access to adequate care or trained health care professionals. The Partnership estimates that every minute, a woman dies of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. This adds up to more than 500,000 women annually and 10 million women over a generation. A child under the age of five dies every three seconds. Almost all of these women and children – 99% -- live and die in developing countries. Almost 7.2 million young children and mothers could be saved every year through affordable, known solutions, yet this incredible tragedy is little-known to most citizens in affluent G-8 countries, including Canada.

A delegation representing the PMNCH, a global health partnership launched in September 2005 to improve maternal, newborn and child health, will be in Ottawa later this week for its 7th Board meeting, hosted by The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), a Board Member. PMNCH and SOGC will also host **two events** to highlight the plight of women and children around the world and international agreements committing governments to action, specifically the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5¹. There are eight MDGs, agreed to by the UN General Assembly in 2000, which together set the global agenda for eradicating extreme poverty and its effects.

The PMNCH will also issue a call for engagement to Canadian parliamentarians to do their part to ensure that maternal, newborn and child health is on the G8/G20 agenda next year and to sustain Canadian contributions to international efforts focused on women and mothers, their babies and children.

SPECIAL EVENT

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 2, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Place: Room 752, 131 Queen Street, Ottawa
The Event: The PMNCH will host parliamentarians, media and representatives of the non-governmental sector at an informal reception designed to build networks and awareness about the Partnership's goals and new information about maternal, newborn and child health.

PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Date/Time: Thursday, December 3, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.
Place: Aboriginal Committee Room, S160, Centre Block, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa
Co-chairs: Senator Wilbert Kéon, Bob Rae, M.P.,
Judy Wasylycia-Leis, M.P.
France Bonsant, M.P.

¹ UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 & 5 call for reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five and reducing by three-quarters of the maternal mortality ratio by 2015 respectively.

The Breakfast is sponsored by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the PMNCH. MPs and Senators will hear about Canada's contribution to reducing maternal and child mortality, and international experts, PMNCH Board Members will present the latest information and statistics about the state of maternal and child health around the world. The PMNCH will also issue a call to action and let parliamentarians know what they can do to help save the lives of millions of mothers, babies and young children in developing countries.

Featured Spokespersons:

- Honourable Minister of Health, Nigeria: Dr Babatunde Osotimehin
- Dr. Julian Schweitzer, (Acting PMNCH Board Chair), Acting Vice President, Human Development Network and Sector Director of Health, Nutrition and Population at the World Bank/ Ann Starrs (PMNCH Board Co-Chair), President of Family Care International
- Dr. Andre Lalonde, Executive Vice-President, The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)
- Purnima Mane, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director
- Dr Flavia Bustreo, Director, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health.

Spokespeople will be available for one-on-one media interviews. Members of the media are invited to attend both the **Special Event & Reception** and the **Parliamentary Breakfast Briefing**.

Media Contacts:

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- Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) web site:
www.pmnch.org
- Countdown to 2015 for Maternal, Newborn & Child Survival web site:
<http://www.countdown2015mnch.org/>
- SOGC website: www.sogc.org
- Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) web site:
<http://www.figo.org/>

About PMNCH

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health is an international alliance of some 280 governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, health care professionals, academics, and multilateral agencies. Its mission is to support the global health community to work successfully towards achieving MDGs 4 and 5 by advocating for national, regional and global political commitments, and by raising funds to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality.