

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **The Canadian Council for International Co-operation welcomes new funding initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health by federal government**

Ottawa, November 5 2014. The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) is reacting positively to the funding announcement made earlier today by the Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development and for La Francophonie.

Minister Paradis announced an allocation of \$ 370 million to the *Partnerships for Strengthening Maternal, Newborn and Child Health* call for proposals. This call will fund projects by Canadian groups working in developing countries over the next five years. This is a follow-up to Prime Minister Harper's announcement in May of this year to continue championing the cause of maternal, newborn and child health as Canada's top development priority.

The call is open to Canadian NGOs, civil society groups and private sector organizations with experience in international development, and MNCH more specifically. Two streams have been established: one for projects between 1 and 20 million dollars, and another for projects of 20 million or more. The call also limits the number of proposals that an organization can bid for to one. All of these features should help mobilize a larger range of actors to support this initiative.

"Having two streams is a welcome feature of this call", said Julia Sánchez, President-CEO of CCIC. "It should allow for greater participation from small and medium sized organizations alongside larger ones. Let's not forget that smaller organizations have been hit the hardest by reductions and changes in funding modalities imposed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) since 2010. And they have an important contribution to make in mobilizing Canadians around important objectives such as MNCH", she added.

Other welcome characteristics of this call, as identified by CCIC, include: a provision of up to 10% of total project funds for public engagement activities; a common performance framework with pre-determined indicators to allow for aggregate results to be reported across projects – addressing one of the shortcomings of the previous arrangement; a lower cost-sharing requirement (15% instead of 25%); and, a new area of focus around accountability for results.

"The new MNCH initiative is a key priority for the government," added Ms. Sánchez, "and how they have rolled this out is a step in the right direction. Looking forward, we will be looking to see how the new funding also strengthens the capacity of women's groups to promote and defend women's rights - a core issue at the root of the challenges posed by MNCH."

From a budget perspective, the 370 million dedicated to this call (from a total commitment of 3.5 billion for MNCH for 2015-2020) also compares favorably to the 75 million of the previous MNCH call for proposals (from a total of 2.9 billion for 2010-2015).

"We look forward to increased and stronger partnerships between DFATD and civil society" indicated Ms. Sanchez. "DFATD needs to be more transparent and expedient with respect to future funding opportunities, timelines for decision making, and also needs to complement this

type of specific calls for proposals with mechanisms that are responsive to other development priorities of civil society groups and their counterparts on the ground,” she concluded.

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**Notes:**

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) is a coalition of Canadian voluntary sector organizations working globally to achieve sustainable human development since 1968. CCIC seeks to end global poverty and to promote social justice and human dignity for all.

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