

CanWaCH
Canadian Partnership for
Women and Children's Health



CanSFE
Partenariat canadien pour la
santé des femmes et des enfants

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2025 Federal
Budget**

**By: Canadian Partnership for Women and
Children's Health**

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the government commit an additional \$650 million per year for four years until 2028/29 in support of improved outcomes for young people, especially young women and girls.

Recommendation 2: That the government deliver on its [10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights](#) by committing its fair share of investments in key global health initiatives and supporting the following replenishments in 2024/25: \$150 million over three years to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative; at least \$720 million over five years to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; and its fair share pledge to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria.

Recommendation 3: That the government respond to the unprecedented hunger and malnutrition crisis by increasing its nutrition-specific investment to \$750 million over five years ensuring this funding is predictable, flexible and gender transformative.

Recommendation 4: That the government ensures funding for health programming through the International Assistance Envelope uses integrated and comprehensive approaches that specifically address the unique health needs of women and children adapting to the increased frequency of high-intensity wildfires, droughts, floods and storms.



Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH)

The Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH) is a proud membership of more than 100 non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, health professional associations and private sector entities committed to advancing the health and rights of women, children and adolescents globally.

In support of the Government of Canada since 2010, CanWaCH works to unite leading organizations to work alongside women and children around the globe. We connect experts to leverage this collective power by providing access to knowledge and resources to strengthen impact. CanWaCH members and partners are at the forefront of transformative work in global health and rights.

Canada's role in supporting improved health outcomes for women and children

The compounding impacts of increasingly violent conflicts over the past decade and the prevalence of extreme weather events have left women and children especially vulnerable and have put global progress at risk.

As Canada assumes the G7 presidency in 2025 and hosts world leaders in Kananaskis, Alberta, next year, we must address these unprecedented and increasingly dire challenges and reaffirm our commitment to the world's most vulnerable.

Canada's leadership has never been more important.

There is no security without democracy and development, and history has shown time and again that there can be no sustainable economic development where people are dying in numbers from outbreaks of preventable diseases, health complications, malnutrition and violent conflict. The impact of under-investment in international assistance, gender equality, and global health is that women and children have lower life expectancies, communities remain underdeveloped and economic growth is unrealized not only in the global south but worldwide.

Maintaining Canada's global leadership position

Empowering young people, especially young women, is one of the most effective ways to drive economic growth, reduce poverty and promote peace and stability. For every \$1 of Official Development Assistance invested in children there is a return of [\\$10 in benefits](#) to the child and broader community. Young women's participation in the workforce and in decision-making processes consistently leads to more resilient economies, stable societies and a more prosperous world.

But much of this potential economic and social development remains untapped as long as women and girls are deprived of access to healthcare, nutrition and education.



With substantial investments since 2010, Canada's women and children's health sector comprises world-renowned experts and fundamental delivery partners; this is a core area where Canada punches above its weight.

The program outcomes have supported community-building activities from vaccination clinics in remote communities to fundamental healthcare services in informal settlements. Canadian organizations have proudly represented our nation's fundamental belief that we have a global responsibility to support the health and well-being of women and children around the world.

However, limited funding envelopes across funding governments for health around the globe have limited progress and are insufficient to address the substantial needs since the pandemic.

Contrasted with Canada's leadership across successive governments, we have made bold investments in women and children's health and have been a leading donor in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). In fiscal year [2021/2022](#), Canadian-funded projects delivered SRHR services to 5.7 million women and girls in nearly 30 countries. At a moment when women's rights are under threat around the world, we must continue to stand up for women and girls' right to thrive in *full* health, including the most neglected areas of SRHR.

We urge the Government of Canada to invest in programming that ensures women and children around the world have access to the food, nutrition, comprehensive health care and education they need to succeed, including critical social and environmental determinants of health.

Increased investment to Canada's International Assistance Envelope, in combination with existing funding from Canada's 10 Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights, will mean the government is contributing its fair share to women and children's health, rights and nutrition as well as invest in critical development priorities for young generations throughout the global south.

Recommendation 1: That the government commit an additional \$650 million per year for four years until 2028/29 in support of improved outcomes for young people, especially young women and girls.

Protecting our future by committing our fair share

Through successive governments, Canada's leadership on the global stage has been critical in addressing some of the most pressing health crises the world has encountered, including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and polio.

These investments have seen global success, with key indicators of the transmission of communicable diseases dropping substantially. Since 2010, HIV infections have decreased by 38 per cent, and cases of neglected tropical diseases requiring interventions have declined by 26.1 per cent – but ongoing investments are required to ensure the progress remains constant. The impact of these commitments means that today, a child born in a Gavi-supported country is 70 per cent less likely to die from a vaccine-preventable disease.

It is imperative that the Government of Canada commit to continuing this global progress by replenishing the global health initiatives coordinating the global response to these deadly diseases, including Gavi's 2026-2030 strategy, which offers a unique opportunity to significantly accelerate this



impact — the last opportunity to do so before the 2030 deadline to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 2: That the government deliver on its [10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights](#) by committing its fair share of investments in key global health initiatives and supporting the following replenishments in 2024/25: \$150 million over three years to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative; at least \$720 million over five years to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; and its fair share pledge to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria.

Creating the conditions for well-nourished populations

Every year, malnutrition alone kills more women than tobacco, alcohol and air pollution combined, and [recent reporting](#) found that the impacts of conflict, the pandemic and the climate crisis have led to a “critical regression across virtually every major measure of childhood well-being.”

As the government establishes its budget priorities, it should focus efforts on addressing the critical nutrition needs of vulnerable women and children by scaling its investments in cost-effective, high-impact nutrition focused interventions.

One out of 11 people in the world, and one out of every five in Africa, have faced hunger in [2023](#). More specifically, one in four children under the age of five live in severe child food poverty, putting them at greater risk of malnutrition and life-threatening illness.

Malnutrition disproportionately impacts women and girls, who most often eat last and least due to severe inequalities in power, salary, education and health. Between 2020 and 2022, acute malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women and adolescent girls rose by [25%](#). In addition, [nearly 40%](#) of pregnant women globally experience anaemia, increasing the risk of preterm birth and postpartum hemorrhage, leading causes of maternal deaths.

With its longstanding commitment to anaemia and women’s nutrition, Canada is well-positioned within the global development agenda as a leader, recognized for its role as a champion of social progress. By scaling-up proven, low cost, high-impact nutrition interventions, including [Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation \(MMS\)](#) for pregnant women, Canada can help break the cycle of malnutrition for millions.

It is also imperative that the Government of Canada create the conditions for positive economic growth in the communities it is supporting. Globally, undernutrition costs the world at least \$761 billion per year, equivalent to 1 per cent of global income. If ambitious action is not taken by governments like Canada, \$4 trillion could be lost globally due to undernutrition between 2025-2030.

Recommendation 3: That the government respond to the unprecedented hunger and malnutrition crisis by increasing its nutrition-specific investment to \$750 million over five years ensuring this funding is predictable, flexible and gender transformative.



Ensuring an integrated approach to global health programming

Canadian implementing partners have been at the frontier of innovative, integrated development programming that addresses the intricacies and complexities of delivering improved health outcomes that respect human rights and freedoms.

With the increased frequency and severity of hurricanes, tropical storms, droughts, floods and wildfires worldwide, access to health care, education and other essential services has become increasingly challenging throughout the global south, especially for women and children.

Conflict and climate change are amplifying long standing inequalities in access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), the enjoyment of good health and wellbeing, exposing children to climate-induced health risks and food insecurity, creating physical barriers to healthcare access and intensifying gender inequalities as young women and girls are forced to travel further through more extreme conditions to gain a basic education.

As the government looks to develop the agenda for its 2025 G7 presidency, it is critical that adequate attention is given to programming that addresses the unique challenges women and children face in adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change. By emphasizing the importance of an integrated approach to development that favors the health and wellbeing of both people and planet, we can safeguard Canadian investments in health made to date. One primary investment that Canada can integrate into the programs it funds is in WASH services — saving at least 1.4 million lives each year with a return on investment of \$3.60 to \$10.97 CAD for every dollar spent.

The G20 Call to Action for Strengthening Drinking-water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services exemplifies how Canada can demonstrate its leadership for gender equality to achieve universal access to WASH for health, education, nutrition and women and girls' empowerment.

By prioritizing policies that underscore the importance of a gender-transformative and comprehensive approach to health and education programming, Canada can further its global leadership in integrating climate mitigation and adaptation into health programming.

Recommendation 4: That the government ensures funding for health programming through the International Assistance Envelope uses integrated and comprehensive approaches that specifically address the unique health needs of women and children adapting to the increased frequency of high-intensity wildfires, droughts, floods and storms.

Conclusion

Around the world, the impacts of global inflation and climate change, the rising tide of authoritarian regimes and the increasing number and complexity of conflicts have created immense uncertainty and unpredictability. As governments across Canada work to tackle domestic challenges like the rising cost of living and food security, it is imperative that the Government of Canada ensures we don't leave anyone behind.



Canada has positioned itself as a champion for the health and rights of women and girls around the world. Ongoing violence in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and Haiti places more women and girls in danger. Threats to the rights of women and girls have been on the rise. This is a critical moment for Canada to recommit to championing women and children's health and rights around the world.

As the Government of Canada prepares Budget 2025, it must understand that Canadians recognize the importance of international assistance for women and children, and support increases in global assistance through health-related investments.

