



RESULTS UK is joining with other RESULTS countries to influence our respective governments to ensure that the Canadian G8 initiative on maternal and child health is as strong as possible. As part of this work, several RESULTS offices have drafted letters to the Canadian government representatives in their countries.

RESULTS UK's letter is below:

16 April 2010

Dear High Commissioner,

I am writing on behalf of RESULTS UK – a grassroots advocacy organisation that supports citizens across the UK to generate the political will to end extreme poverty – with some urgent requests that we would like you to pass on to the Government of Canada.

We welcome Canada's decision to make saving the lives of millions more women, children and newborns the signature development theme of the 2010 G8 Summit. Each year, 8.8 million children around the world die needlessly from mainly preventable and treatable diseases and 343,000 women die each year during pregnancy or childbirth.

It is estimated that over 60% of the 8.8 million child deaths each year can be prevented through 23 well-proven responses, such as breastfeeding, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, immunisation, micro-nutrients, and oral rehydration therapy to treat diarrhoea. Canada has already demonstrated its commitment to child survival through launching the *Catalytic Initiative to Save a Million Lives* (CI) in 2007. We encourage the Canadian Government to expand the CI and leverage additional support from other G8 donors to ensure that millions more lives are saved.

We appreciate the CI's focus on treating and preventing the illnesses and diseases that kill large numbers of children. Poor sanitation and hygiene, along with lack of access to clean water, are behind more than one-quarter of under-five deaths. The two biggest killers of children – diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections – are both closely linked to poor sanitation and hygiene practices. Simple, cost-effective interventions such as promoting handwashing with soap could avert as many as one million deaths every year. Canada and the UK should both strengthen their work on child survival by ensuring that sanitation and hygiene interventions are an enhanced component of integrated efforts to improve child health and are a key part of the package of announcements that are made at the G8 this year.

New data released this month shows that despite global progress in addressing maternal mortality, maternal deaths are still too high and increasing in Eastern and Southern Africa, largely because of HIV and AIDS. Increasing access to antiretroviral therapy for HIV-positive women and treatment for opportunistic infections such as TB is therefore crucial.

The single biggest contributor to the fight against HIV and the other major epidemics affecting the developing world is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). These three diseases directly cause 1.1 million deaths a year among women aged 15-59 and 1.2 million deaths among children under four.

An investment in the Global Fund is an investment in maternal health and child survival. In 2009 alone, 345,000 HIV-positive pregnant women around the world received preventive treatment to halt mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) thanks to Global Fund supported programmes. PMTCT efforts are estimated to have averted 82,000 new HIV infections among children since 2003.

Since the Global Fund was established, 104 million insecticide-treated bed nets have been distributed to curb malaria, which is primarily a success in preventing child deaths since more than 80 per cent of the one million malaria deaths each year are among children. Also, the Fund's unprecedented successes in providing TB and HIV treatments to keep young parents alive ensure that millions of children are not left impoverished or orphaned.

No other global mechanism has achieved such dramatic results in such a brief time. But, unparalleled success has also created increasing demand. As demand has soared and as successful proposals for funding continue to pour in, donor funding has not kept pace. Without an infusion of support at the Global Fund's Replenishment Conference this October, new proposals will go unfunded and people, particularly women and children, will die needlessly. The Fund needs at least US\$18-20bn over the next three years to cover expansion of programmes for the three diseases, but it has only around half of that amount from donor countries. We therefore call upon the Canadian Government, as chair of the G8, to ensure that all members contribute their 'fair share' at the Replenishment Conference to ensure this funding gap is filled.

In summary, we would like the G8 to make three commitments this year which will dramatically improve the health of women and children around the world: (1) increase support for a package of cost-effective child survival interventions through an expanded Catalytic Initiative; (2) fully integrate sanitation and hygiene into the G8's response to maternal and child health; (3) ensure that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria is fully funded at the next Replenishment Conference.

We would be very grateful if you could pass these requests on to your relevant colleagues in the Canadian Government and inform us of any responses that you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Aaron Oxley
Executive Director, RESULTS UK