

June 8, 2015

The Honourable Rob Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Hon. Mr. Nicholson,

I write to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (CAPPD), an all-party parliamentary association that works to advance issues related to population, health, women's empowerment and development. CAPPD is made up of members from the House of Commons and the Senate, representing all major political parties.

We first want to congratulate Canada on its efforts to address maternal, newborn and child health, child early and forced marriage (CEFM) and sexual violence in conflict, among other initiatives, for which Canada continues to be seen as a global leader. Not only has the Government made significant financial contributions to address these issues, it has mobilized the international community to advance global policy on these previously under-addressed issues.

Among these efforts is Canada's role as chair of the negotiations of the annual resolution on violence against women, which it continues to lead at the UN Human Rights Council. In previous years, Canada has played a leadership role in helping to create advances seeking to protect women from violence. This year's resolution will focus on violence against women in the domestic sphere, referring to violence perpetrated by an intimate partner or a family member against women and girls.

The prevalence of domestic violence is known to be very high. According to the World Health Organization, worldwide, almost 1/3 of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced some form of violence by their intimate partner. According to UNICEF, in the 29 countries for which data is available, more than 130 million girls and women have experienced this type of violence. Domestic violence has profound effects on women and girls' physical and mental health and negatively impacts maternal morbidity and mortality.

In thinking about the contents of the resolution, and specifically the concrete actions States can take to address domestic violence, we urge you to include:

- Enacting and implementing legislation that prohibits all forms of violence against women in the domestic sphere (including marital rape) and increasing public awareness of the law, especially among women and girls;
- Transforming norms around masculinity and the regulation of women's and girls' sexuality and modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct that foster harmful practices that women and girls are subjected to (including CEFM);
- Implementing comprehensive approaches to prevent, investigate and punish all acts of violence against women in the domestic sphere; and
- Providing victims and survivors of violence remedy, reparation and support services (including: shelter, protection, legal support, employment and health-care services that are responsive to trauma and include affordable, safe, effective and good-quality medicines, safe abortion services, first line support, treatment of injuries and psychosocial and mental health support, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection, diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, training for medical professionals to effectively identify and treat women subjected to violence and forensic examinations by appropriately trained professionals).

The Government of Canada has already taken steps to address violence against women; including championing the collection of sex disaggregated data, establishing the international day of the girl child, leading the UN resolution on CEFM alongside Zambia and leveraging over \$7 billion from G7 partners in support of the 2010-2015 MNCH initiative. Looking forward, we encourage the Government to continue, and increase its support for the issues listed above both in Canada and globally.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the contents of this resolution in greater detail,

Sincerely,

On behalf of the CAPPD Executive Committee

The CAPPD Executive Committee is made up of:

- Rathika Sitsabaiesan (MP – Scarborough-Rouge-River) CAPPD Chair
- Dr. Hedy Fry, (MP – Vancouver Centre) CAPPD Vice-Chair
- Sadia Groguhé (MP - Saint-Lambert) CAPPD Vice-Chair
- Elizabeth May (MP - Saanich - Gulf Islands) CAPPD Vice-Chair
- Wai Young (MP – Vancouver South) CAPPD Vice-Chair
- Senator Raynell Andreychuk (Saskatchewan) CAPPD Director
- Dr. Carolyn Bennett (MP - Toronto-St.-Pauls) CAPPD Director
- Mylène Freeman (MP - Argenteuil-Papineau-Mirabel) CAPPD Director
- Isabelle Morin (MP - Nôtre-Dame-De-Grâce-Lachine) CAPPD Director