

Eight in Ten (82%) Canadians Say It's Important to them Personally that Canada Helps Improve Child and Maternal Health in Developing Countries

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Eight in Ten (82%) Canadians Say It's Important to them Personally that Canada Helps Improve Child and Maternal Health in Developing Countries

Toronto, ON – With Prime Minister Harper expected to make maternal and child health a focus of his upcoming address to the United Nations General Assembly, a new survey conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of World Vision Canada reveals that most Canadians place a personal importance on the issue of maternal and children's health in developing countries and want Canada to continue to be a major presence on the topic for the foreseeable future.

The survey reveals that eight in ten (82%) 'agree' (33% strongly/49% somewhat) that it is important to them, personally, that Canada work to help improve child and maternal health in developing countries, while fewer than two in ten (18%) 'disagree' (4% strongly/14% somewhat).

With nine in ten (91%) 'agreeing' (60% strongly/31% somewhat) that children dying before the age of 5 anywhere in the world is not acceptable to them, eight in ten (84%) indicate that they want Canada to be known as a global leader in finding solutions to poverty and protecting the world's children. An equal proportion (84%) even say that Canada has a moral imperative to try and save the lives of children who are dying from preventable causes. Just one in five (16%) 'disagrees' that Canada has a moral obligation to act.

Foreign Funding Focus Should Continue on Current Course...

Since 2010, Canada has led a global initiative to invest funds in child, newborn and maternal health. Canada has contributed \$6.35 billion in this area, and has encouraged other countries to increase their funding for this initiative.

Canadians especially want this focus to continue for children living in areas of conflict. Nine in ten (88%) Canadians 'agree' (37% strongly/51% somewhat) that children living in conflict zones or who are relegated to the margins of society must be front and centre in aid efforts, even if they are harder to reach, while just one in ten (12%) 'disagrees' (2% strongly/10% somewhat) with this sentiment.

Current State of Child Mortality Rates...

In developing countries, 18,000 children die every day from preventable causes such as birth complications, diarrhea, malaria, measles and AIDS and Canadians believe there is an assortment of reasons as to why this continues:

- Children cannot access health care because it is too far away and/or too expensive (45%)
- There is not enough medicine available in their countries (30%)
- There are not enough doctors, nurses and trained midwives in their countries (27%)
- Their governments underestimate or misunderstand their needs (25%)
- Wealthier countries are not providing enough aid and support for healthcare initiatives (17%)
- Other reasons (7%)

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- 2 -

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Since 2010, the global child mortality rate has dropped faster than ever before. Yet, every year 6.6 million children still die before reaching their fifth birthday. While many resources can be impactful in curbing these premature deaths, Canadians are split on what, specifically, could be most impactful:

- Immunizing children against life-threatening diseases (30%)
- Providing children with access to clean drinking water (26%)
- Providing children with enough nutritious food (25%)
- Helping families time and space the births of their children in a way that is safest for mothers and babies (15%)
- Making sure mothers have skilled attendants to help them give birth safely (3%)

Although global child and maternal death rates are dropping, there has been less progress in some countries than others. Conflict and instability make it challenging to reach people in remote communities and deliver assistance. For example, in Somalia the mortality rate of children under 5 years is about 18 percent, while in neighbouring Tanzania it has dropped to 8 percent. With this in mind, three quarters (73%) of Canadians believe that funds allocated to child, newborn, and maternal health initiatives should be spent in countries where the need is greatest, even if it is more difficult to reach people and getting results is more difficult, compared to three in ten (27%) who think this funding should be spent in countries where it's easier to do development work, and results are easier to achieve.

Improving Health Through Civil Registration...

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- 3 -

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Globally, one third of all children under the age of five has not been registered at birth and has no birth certificate or proof of identity. As such, their governments are unaware that they exist. These uncounted, unreached children are often the most vulnerable and hardest to reach

Most Canadians (64%) 'agree' (27% strongly/37% somewhat) that they are were not aware that registering a child's birth can have an impact on their health, while one in three (36%) 'disagree' (15% strongly/21% somewhat) and were aware of this. Having said this, nine in ten (90%) 'agree' (53% strongly/37% somewhat) that making sure every child is known to its country's government is an important step to improving the lives of children, while one in ten (10%) would 'disagree' (2% strongly/8% somewhat).

Nine in ten (87%) 'agree' (53% strongly/34% somewhat) that they would consider their own birth certificate to be one of my most important personal documents, while one in ten (13%) would 'disagree' (2% strongly/11% somewhat). As such, nearly all (94%) Canadians 'agree' (64% strongly/30% somewhat) that every child, no matter where he or she is born, should be registered at birth and receive a birth certificate, while only a handful (6%) 'disagrees' (1% strongly/5% somewhat).

With Canada promoting its newborn and maternal health initiatives, eight in ten (84%) Canadians 'agree' (35% strongly/49% somewhat) that to reach the most vulnerable, Canadian development work should include helping countries to improve their civil registration, while fewer than two in ten (16%) 'disagree' (3% strongly/13% somewhat) that this should be a focus.

Who's Responsible for Improving Children's Lives?

Asked to choose two bodies responsible for improving the lives of children around the world, the survey reveals that Canadians believe there is no clear cut winner but rather it is a shared responsibility, although there is less support for the private sector:

- The United Nations (34%)
- Governments of poor countries (32%)
- Governments of wealthy countries (32%)
- Charities/NGOs (28%)
- The children's parents (24%)
- Influential global leaders (23%)
- Wealthy individuals around the world (13%)
- Private Sector (5%)
- None of these (4%)

These are some of the results of a survey conducted by Ipsos Reid conducted on behalf of World Vision Canada between September 11th to 15th, 2014. The results are based on a sample of n=1,016 Canadian adults in the general population where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian student population according to Census data. The precision of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a Bayesian credibility interval. In this case, the survey results are accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire population of Canadian adults been surveyed. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

-30-

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- 5 -

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Sean Simpson
Vice President
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 572-4474*

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- 6 -

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