PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

August 23, 2016

Dear Friends:

Thank you for the letter you sent to me on International Women's Day and for calling on world leaders to recognize the indisputable link between gender inequality and extreme poverty. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I am writing back to let you know that I wholeheartedly agree: Poverty is Sexist.

Women and girls are less likely to get an education, more likely to be impoverished, and face greater risk of disease and poor health. I am grateful to groups like ONE, who work toward ending extreme poverty and gender inequality around the world, while also holding global leaders accountable.

I accept your challenge to lead. As a feminist, I know that women must be treated equally everywhere. That is why, as one of my first actions as Prime Minister, I named a gender balanced Cabinet. It is my hope that this will set an example for governments around the world.

The Government of Canada is taking another important and concrete step: we will host the Global Fund replenishment conference in Montreal in September. We have also raised our contribution by 20% to $785 million CDN.

Investing in the Global Fund – which fights HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis – is critical, particularly for young women, who account for a shocking 74% of all new HIV infections among adolescents in Africa. Canada's increased investment means more mosquito nets and medicine, and greater access to treatment and therapy, all of which will help the Global Fund meet its ultimate goal of saving an additional eight million lives and averting an additional 300 million new infections by 2019.

This commitment could not come at a more important time. The world has a unique opportunity to make lasting progress. By fast-tracking investments and building global solidarity, we can bring an end to three devastating epidemics – HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis – that have tragic and far-reaching impacts on the most vulnerable people around the world.

Canada's commitment to the Global Fund is the first step on a path toward a new global policy that prioritizes equal treatment of girls and women. Investing in health will enable girls and women to survive and flourish, including by making key contributions to ending extreme poverty for everyone.

But no one leader can make this happen alone. Canada can play an important role, but we need other leaders around the world to step up, too. And that's where you come in.

Please continue to use your voice to ask for more from all leaders around the world. Please ask them to come to the Global Fund Replenishment Conference with ambitious goals, investments, and innovations in support of girls and women everywhere.

And please know that your call has been heard and that the Government of Canada is taking action.

Thanks, and see you soon.

