



PRESS RELEASE

Canada to support UNFPA Somalia on a New Initiative on Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights through Midwifery Education and Practice

Nairobi: Friday 28 August 2020 - The Government of Canada has provided CAD\$ 11 million to support the Government of Somalia, through UNFPA, on a new initiative on Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights through strengthening midwifery education and practice. This includes CAD\$ 1 million dedicated to an enhanced response to the current COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health care providers and the patients being treated at health facilities.

The initiative is aimed at reducing maternal mortality and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. It will increase the number of trained midwives, strengthen teaching capacity in 15 midwifery school, and ensure that health facilities can provide high quality clinical practicum training experience. In addition, the initiative will help update the midwifery curriculum by including respectful maternity care and rights-based sexual and reproductive health content.

“Canada hopes that this initiative will help ensure that Somalis are able to live to their full potential and become drivers of peace and positive change for themselves, their families and Somalia,” said Her Excellency Lisa Stadelbauer, Ambassador of Canada to Somalia.

The Ambassador said Canada is looking forward to the implementation of the initiative to ensure that it contributes to the plans and priorities of the Government of Somalia and that it is coordinated with other investments in the health sector.

UNFPA Somalia Representative Mr. Anders Thomsen expressed gratitude to the Government of Canada saying the UN agency is dedicated to working with the Government of Somalia towards building a competent, well-trained and well-supported midwifery workforce and developing strong regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality services for women. “Midwives save lives. They are the steadfast champions for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. They are also the backbone of maternal health systems; delivering babies and much more,” said Mr. Thomsen.

Canada’s support is coming at the right time when Somalia is stepping up efforts to strengthen skills and competencies for midwives as one way of bringing down the maternal mortality rate which is one of the highest globally. Currently, one in 20 women in Somalia has a lifetime risk of dying while giving life.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Embassy of Canada to Somalia

Canada first established diplomatic relations with Somalia in 1968. These relations were subsequently suspended after the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. Following the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, Canada re-established diplomatic relations with Somalia in 2013. In early 2019, Canada began a program of enhanced bilateral cooperation with Somalia. This enhanced cooperation is focused on improving the health of women and girls, and promoting inclusive and transparent governance.

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