

NEWS RELEASE**Attention: Assignment Editors/Political Columnists**

Canada's largest NGO calls on Harper Government to prioritize children

World Vision takes aim at child & maternal health, child trafficking, food security, aid funding

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (May 3, 2011) – Today, World Vision calls on the government to be a global leader in prioritizing children's health and protection. With the support of more than 600,000 Canadians, World Vision is a voice for the most vulnerable and marginalized children and families in developing countries, in Canada and around the world. World Vision will keep knocking on the doors of the Prime Minister and Parliament to make sure the values and generosity of Canadians are consistent with the priorities of the Canadian government.

World Vision is calling on the Harper Government to:

1. **Keep momentum strong on reducing child and maternal deaths.** Canada has emerged as a global leader on reducing child and maternal deaths, but the work is far from finished. More than eight million children will die before reaching their fifth birthday this year—largely from preventable causes. Globally, \$40 billion has been committed to saving the lives of children and mothers, including \$1.5 billion from World Vision and \$1.1 billion from the Canadian government. These children and moms are counting on this funding. It must be delivered as promised and targeted to projects resulting in lives saved.
2. **Target all aspects of human trafficking.** Child trafficking is a worldwide threat to children and child protection. We'll never put an end to trafficking if we limit our efforts to our borders—because this crime has no borders. Canada is a known source, transit and destination point for human trafficking. Canada's national strategy must target all aspects of this shameful crime. It must address international aspects of trafficking, all people vulnerable to trafficking, including boys and men, all types of trafficking, and ensure solid support for child victims. The voices of victims, vulnerable children and youth, NGOs, police and aboriginal peoples of Canada must be heard.
3. **Renew critical funding for food security.** The current food price crisis is eerily similar to 2008 when rising food prices made a terrible situation worse for children in developing countries. Canada made a commitment at the 2009 G-8 summit to deliver an additional \$600 million worth of aid for agriculture. This funding ran out right before the election and the timing couldn't be worse for children and families who are already spending 50 to 80 per cent of their income on food. Canada must commit to renewing this work.
4. **Unfreeze overseas development assistance.** It's hard to be a global leader with a frozen aid budget. Prime Minister Harper must commit to lifting the freeze on aid. Likewise, leaders of the NDP, Liberal, Bloc and Green parties also must push for this. Canadians are generous and compassionate people. We saw this generosity during the Haiti earthquake response when Canadians donated \$220 million. We see it with the more than 600,000 Canadians who support long-term development projects through World Vision and know that frozen aid is less effective aid.

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.