

**Maternal health is about more than saving the lives of women and children. It's about fundamental human rights: the right of a woman to control her sexual health; the right of women and men to access sex education and contraception; and the right of women to plan and space childbirths.**

**Reproductive rights will only be achieved when inequalities between women and men are overcome. Only then will we end the injustice of one thousand women dying each day due to pregnancy-related causes.**

**In most of the world, we're far from securing reproductive rights. 350,000 women die each year in pregnancy or childbirth – that's one every minute. Nearly 15 per cent of these deaths – one every eight minutes – is a result of unsafe abortion. 137 million women in developing countries who say they do not want to have a child at this time have no access to modern methods of contraception. It's time we address these facts. It's time world leaders recognize their responsibility to protect women's reproductive rights.**

**We are women from across Canada, standing in solidarity with women and men around the world, to demand the G8's special initiative on maternal and child health:**

- recognizes gender inequality as one of the key factors affecting women's health
- supports concrete actions to secure equality, including action to end violence against women
- commits to advancing the reproductive health and rights of all
- ensures universal access to comprehensive healthcare, with special attention to expectant mothers
- is financed with new, additional funds, not repackaged money taken from other crucial aid commitments.

**We implore the G8 to keep its promises to the world's poor, ensuring the maternal health initiative protects women's rights and advances gender justice.**

**Signed,**

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Dub Poet & Cultural Strategist

**Cara Banks**  
Chair of the Prairie Lily Feminist Society

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Chair of the Early Learning Childcare Coalition of Saskatchewan

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