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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Address

by

**the Honourable Deepak Obhrai
Member of Parliament for Calgary East and
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
and for International Human Rights**

**At the Canadian Launch of the
2015 World Development Report: *Mind, Society and Behaviour***

**March 18, 2015
Calgary, Alberta**

Thank you President Cannon for such kind words.

It is always great to get back home, but doubly so today—not only am I here as the Member of Parliament for Calgary East, I am also representing Canada's Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Christian Paradis.

Minister Paradis regrets that he could not participate in today's event. But his engagements elsewhere have worked out in my favour—I am pleased to join you on his behalf.

This is the first time that the University of Calgary has hosted the Canadian launch of the World Bank's World Development Report. It is great to see so much interest and enthusiasm for what really is a thought-provoking study of the global development landscape.

The World Bank delivers a cutting-edge outlook on the development challenges of today. Its report gives us a new perspective that reminds us why we need to approach development in a different way.

Which in fact is perfect timing because the post-2015 development agenda is all about being innovative.

About finding new and more efficient ways to get development results.

And about breaking away from the barriers that have traditionally kept us from fully securing the future for the world's most vulnerable people.

As noted in the Report, understanding how people make choices can help development actors become more effective—both in the delivery of their programs and in the creation of their programming.

This relates particularly well to Canada's efforts in maternal, newborn and child health.

Prime Minister Harper launched the Muskoka Initiative in 2010 because he believes that if a child's death can be prevented, we should do everything we can to do just that.

As a country, we cannot stand idly by while women and children around the world suffer and die from largely preventable causes.

We have made significant progress.

By working with Canadian and global partners, Canada has improved the health of women and children across the globe.

For example, more than 75 thousand health workers have been trained.

Over 1.9 million pregnant women have received iron and folic acid supplements to help ensure healthy pregnancies.

And more than 5.8 million children received life-saving vaccinations against leading infectious diseases.

Many more women are surviving pregnancy and childbirth, and many more children are living to celebrate their fifth birthday.

These are significant results.

But we still have much to do if we are to reach our ultimate goal of eliminating the preventable deaths of women and children.

Just last fall, Canada, the United States, Norway and the World Bank Group launched an exciting new initiative called the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman Every Child.

The facility will aim to sustainably finance maternal, newborn and child health initiatives with a wide range of financing instruments and involving the private sector as partners.

Canada has earmarked \$100 million for the facility's focus on developing effective and accountable civil registration and vital statistics systems in developing countries.

Ensuring that all vital events, such as births, deaths and causes of death, are registered is critical for advancing maternal, newborn and child health.

The key to success will rest on strong national leadership from developing-country governments and their willingness to strengthen their own systems.

And also on our ability to capitalize on our partnerships with the private sector.

Because private businesses drive economic growth.

Create jobs.

And facilitate wealth distribution.

Ultimately, it is the income generated by private-sector-led economic growth that allows governments to deliver services to their citizens.

That is why Canada leverages private sector capital to invest in growing businesses.

And to create jobs in emerging economies.

As the current Chair of the Redesigning Development Finance Initiative, Minister Paradis is working with global partners to see how we can blend finances from the private sector and other various stakeholders in order to maximize development results.

The objective is to expand the pool of foreign and domestic capital to help developing countries accelerate social and economic progress.

The appeal of this initiative is that it can mobilize funds for any sector, including health or infrastructure investments that have the potential to transform countries.

By the end of this year, Minister Paradis and his colleagues hope to create a useable portfolio of innovative finance models.

And forge new blended finance partnerships that lead to concrete projects and real development results.

As we carry on with our work to advance Canada's prosperity agenda and international development objectives, we will continue to seek out partnerships with more private sector companies, including those of you in Calgary.

Many of you have much to contribute, and can make a meaningful difference in the world.

Canada wants to work with you, and with a wide range of stakeholders, to find new and innovative ways to improve the lives of those most in need.

The 2015 World Development Report gives us much to consider in how we can make that happen.

So I look forward to the presentation and to the discussion that will follow.

I am sure that all of you—from various areas of study here at the University, and from the private sector and civil society community—have opinions on the report. And on how you can contribute to the advancement of Canada’s international development objectives.

So I look forward to hearing about that too.

Thank you.