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# Letter from Minister Bibeau to Canadian partners

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May 25, 2018

Dear partner,

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting international assistance policies and programs that are grounded in respect for human rights. Partnerships with Canadian civil society organizations are central to the delivery of Canada's international assistance programs.

Canada recognizes that the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that have appeared in the media earlier this year do not represent the work of the vast majority of aid workers, nor are they unique to any single organization. International assistance workers are courageous people who often face grave risks in their daily efforts to assist people affected by crises around the world. The reprehensible misconduct of a few individuals is not a reflection of the quality and professionalism that humanitarian and international development workers demonstrate day in and day out.

Canada strongly condemns all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in international assistance. We all have the responsibility to step up to address these issues and produce a real shift in how we work. Appropriate steps must be taken to prevent, respond to, and protect beneficiaries of Canadian international assistance funding from sexual exploitation and abuse.

We must work together to find solutions that build on the efforts and commitments that many of you have already made to both prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation and support survivors in countries where we work.

With that in mind, I am writing to clearly state the expectations that Global Affairs Canada has of your organization:

- a culture of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse in all international assistance settings;
- high standards for vetting and referencing staff within your organization;
- clear, publicly available policies and procedures, including codes of conduct covering

sexual exploitation and abuse;

- accountability mechanisms integrated throughout the organization, including roles and responsibilities to ensure monitoring and compliance with the code of conduct;
- training on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and remedial measures when misconduct is found;
- anonymous and confidential reporting mechanisms to protect victims and whistleblowers and ensure that they receive the support they need;
- monitoring and investigation procedures for all cases of alleged sexual exploitation and abuse, and referral to the relevant authorities in cases of criminal conduct;
- annual reporting to the public of the number of alleged and confirmed cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, including measures taken; and
- informing Global Affairs Canada immediately of alleged cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Global Affairs Canada is committed to supporting collective efforts to strengthen the international system's ability to mitigate the risk of, and respond to, sexual exploitation and abuse to protect the very people we are all trying to assist and also to ensure the trust of Canadians in our international assistance.

We welcome the efforts of Canadian partners to take stock of existing policies and mechanisms, and to improve the tools available to prevent, safeguard, investigate and support victims. We are committed to supporting you identify best practices, develop policies, guideline and tools to help fill identified gaps, and contribute to building capacity within the sector.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months on the above-mentioned issues and to provide assistance.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.

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