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Statement

by

**Lois Brown, Parliamentary Secretary to
the Minister of International Development
and La Francophonie**

at the

Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

**November 19, 2014
Rome, Italy**

Good morning/afternoon, Your Majesties, Excellencies, honourable ministers, delegates, distinguished guests.

On behalf of the Canadian delegation, I would like to thank the Government of Italy for hosting us.

All of us here today understand the importance of nutrition in addressing poverty.

Nutrition is at the centre of Canada's top development priority—improving the health of mothers, newborns and children—and will be a key focus of our \$3.5-billion commitment to this cause from 2015 to 2020.

To achieve our ambitious targets we need all players—health organizations, the food industry, dietitians and nutrition educators, research scientists, all levels of government and consumers—to be engaged.

This includes a greater role for the private sector in achieving development outcomes.

We need effective partnerships—at home and globally.

Partnerships that work toward measurable targets, create accountability and transparency, and coordinate efforts across sectors and stakeholders.

Partnerships like the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, in which Canada is a key actor.

In typical Canadian fashion, we often are too humble to highlight our successes.

Canada is the largest donor to the Micronutrient Initiative—an organization that works to eliminate vitamin and mineral deficiencies in the world's most vulnerable populations.

The Micronutrient Initiative is the largest supplier of vitamin A supplements to developing nations—vitamin A that significantly reduces child mortality and blindness.

The Micronutrient Initiative is also working to reach the last 30 percent of households with no access to iodized salt.

Because iodine is a key micronutrient in the improvement of cognitive function and in the development of healthy brains.

And finally, the Micronutrient Initiative is a leading supplier of zinc, which reduces the harmful effects of diarrhea; iron, which decreases anemia; and folic acid, which helps people absorb nutrients from the food that they eat.

This Canadian organization—in partnership with others—has contributed to saving about 3 million children's lives over the past 15 years.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is another Canadian success story.

Combining grain donations from Canadian farmers and financial donations from churches and individuals, as well as project funding from the Government of Canada, this organization feeds more than a million people every year.

Leading Canadian agricultural organizations, such as Mennonite Economic Development Associates, the Canadian Hunger Foundation and USC Canada, are all

working to improve food security and nutrition by biofortifying crops—adding life-saving micronutrients to family diets.

And they are doing this in environmentally sustainable ways—by selecting locally adapted resilient crops that require minimal technology to grow.

This is a significant shift since ICN1.

The challenge today is to provide the right balance of crops to improve nutrition, not just enough calories to survive.

But we need to do more as a global community.

One way to do this is to improve the collection of data to better measure results.

With more information we can improve our accountability for results.

And we can inform policy decisions to ensure we are using the most efficient and effective methods to improve nutrition.

This means making key nutrition data more available, identifying critical gaps and developing effective partnerships to address them.

As we work to define the post-2015 development agenda, Canada will be a strong voice for creating clear targets with measurable goals.

And we must also ensure that nutrition remains a central commitment of our global cooperation.

Through increased transparency and accountability we can go the final mile and realize our collective vision of a world in which all people have the nutrition they need to flourish.

Thank you.