

Canada's role in Healthy Women, Healthy Economies

SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: ECONOMIC SECURITY OF WOMEN IN CANADA

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Background

EMD Serono, Canada, is the Canadian healthcare business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company, and today is a global leader in healthcare, life sciences and performance materials. We have over 50,000 employees in 66 countries. We have operated in Canada since 1989, employing over 100 employees across the country with headquarters in Mississauga, Ontario.

We think in generations, not only quarters. Our legacy represents a grounding anchor that provides a long-term perspective. We know that success is only sustainable if achieved responsibly. That's why we are committed to making a difference in women's health and economic empowerment.

EMD Serono's business portfolio in Canada reflects our focus on women's health. We have deep expertise in neurology, fertility and endocrinology, as well as a robust pipeline of potential therapies in neurology, oncology, immunology and immuno-oncology.

Women's health and economic well-being is at the centre of our strategic priorities. Over the years, we have sponsored several corporate responsibility initiatives aimed at helping to protect and improve the health status of women and our parent company Merck KGaA actively participates in global private-public partnerships to address women's healthcare needs in developed and developing countries.

We are committed to better health outcomes for women and girls in Canada and around the world, as we believe this can lead to greater economic participation for women and higher overall economic growth.

Healthy Women, Healthy Economies

A study by McKinsey Global Institute found that increasing women's economic participation to the same level as men would add an estimated US \$28 trillion to the global economy.



One of the keys to unleashing the economic power of women is improving women's health, so women can live better lives and join – or remain – in the labour force.

At EMD Serono, we believe better health outcomes for women are inextricably intertwined with improved economic growth and security. Women experience unique health access barriers and differentials in health outcomes, preventing them from achieving their full economic potential. While there is some knowledge on what these barriers are and how to address them, the evidence and best practices are scattered.

To that end, we are a proud founder and sponsor of Healthy Women, Healthy Economies (HWHE), which is an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) initiative that puts the evidence and best practices together into one implementation platform.

By convening government (including health, labour and gender officials), private sector, academia and other interested stakeholders through APEC forums, HWHE aims to raise awareness and promote best practices to improve women's health and economic empowerment. This is a unique initiative to improve women's economic security and promote the equal participation of women in the global economy. Information on Healthy Women, Healthy Economies can be found at <http://healthywomen.apec.org>.

The Way Forward

To guide the action of APEC members participating the Healthy Women, Healthy Economies initiative, a Policy Toolkit was developed by its participants, with a focus on five areas:

1. Workplace Health and Safety
2. Health Access and Awareness
3. Gender-based Violence
4. Sexual and Reproductive Health
5. Work/Life Balance

The full Toolkit and supporting literature review is available at <http://healthywomen.apec.org/policy-toolkit/>. The objective of the Toolkit is to present this information in a user-friendly way, providing a menu of options that national economies may draw from to pilot, implement and scale up on a voluntary basis in order to have the greatest impact in improving economic opportunities for women.

We believe the HWHE initiative is well-aligned with the Canadian government's gender equity agenda, from designing a more generous and flexible caregiver and parental leave policy, to ongoing development aid for maternal sexual and reproductive health.

Our hope is that Canadian policymakers can benefit from the best practices shared through HWHE to close gender gaps in areas such as workplace health and safety and health access and awareness. Just as pressing, however, is the need for Canadian leadership within the HWHE initiative, to share Canada's successes with APEC members so that the global economy as a whole can benefit.

Recommendations

The Healthy Women, Healthy Economies initiative aims to reduce the health barriers to women's full economic participation by affecting policy change. We invite Canada to help shape and influence this change, by raising its voice on the global stage and demonstrating how gender equality can benefit the global economy.

Canada can contribute to Healthy Women, Healthy Economies by:

- Taking a leadership role within the HWHE initiative by sharing Canadian gender equality best practices with APEC members
- Helping to "Canadianize" the HWHE Policy Toolkit by identifying areas where action is needed to benefit Canadian women and the Canadian economy
- Participate in the collection of gender-specific data to help measure the impact of gender equity initiatives across APEC countries

The goal of Healthy Women, Healthy Economies is to strengthen the capacity of women globally in the workforce and to accelerate progress toward global gender parity. Help us enable more women to live healthier lives, so that they can achieve their full economic potential.

For more information, please contact:

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