

Toronto, 11 March, 2020

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

I am writing with regard to your announcement this morning concerning the federal government's response to the Covid-19 situation. We understand and appreciate the challenges presented by this rapidly evolving situation.

Charities and nonprofits are following this situation closely. As community-based service providers, many organizations are on the front line, serving critical needs that tend to be exacerbated in times of crisis. Charities and nonprofits also collectively employ 2.4 million Canadians and own/operate community facilities across Canada and are therefore extremely concerned about the health and safety of their staff, volunteers, and clients.

While it is too early to tell the economic impact that Covid-19 might have, we welcome the government's announcement that the waiting period for EI will be waived for those whose employment might be affected. We also welcome your commitment that ESDC's Work-Sharing program will be flexibly administered so that affected employers and workers can find alternatives to potential layoffs.

I would like to follow up on your comments this morning about further measures to help businesses and employers deal with potential economic disruption. You mentioned that the government was prepared to assist businesses with cash flow issues, through the Business Credit Availability Program, and the press release issued by your office makes specific reference to the Business Development Bank of Canada and the Export Development Corporation.

We are concerned that the BDC interprets its mandate and operates in a manner that precludes assistance or advice to charities and nonprofits.

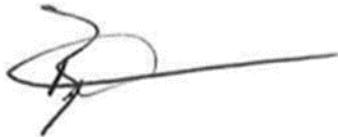
Economic disruption arising from the Covid-19 situation would squeeze charities and nonprofits on several fronts:

- Many organizations will face increased demand for the services they provide.
- Donations from businesses and individuals may be affected, and fundraising events may have to be cancelled. This comes at a time when many organizations already face difficulty generating donations.
- Private and community foundations are already being impacted by market uncertainties, which will affect their ability to provide funding to front-line organizations.

Charities and nonprofits face no less a possibility of significant economic disruption than the private sector, but the tools that have been mooted to assist the private sector would be of little relevance to our sector. **It is imperative that the federal government's response also include and communicate measures that will assist charities and nonprofits in getting through the challenges we all currently face.** As a sector, we are more than happy to work with you and your ministers to identify such measures.

Thank you for your attention, and please accept our best wishes for the days and weeks to come.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bruce MacDonald', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bruce MacDonald
President & CEO

cc: Hon. Bill Morneau, PC, MP, Minister of Finance
Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, PC, MP, President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Mona Fortier, PC, MP, Associate Minister of Finance
Sean Fraser, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance