



## MARKET OPENS FOR AN INCREASED NEED TO INVEST IN GIRLS

Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, FitSpirit/Fillactive, G(irls)20, Plan International Canada and Som Seif call for more investment in girls and women

October 11, 2016 (Toronto) – On the occasion of International Day of the Girl, Madame Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, [FitSpirit/Fillactive](#), [G\(irls\)20](#), [Plan International Canada](#) and expert investor, [Som Seif](#) joined forces today to ring the opening bell at the [Toronto Stock Exchange](#) (TSX). They united in their call for governments and corporations to increase investments that will keep girls in school, encourage healthy and active lifestyles and create leadership roles in their communities and countries.

More than 62 million girls around the world are not in school. Each year, 15 million girls under 18 will be married and 16 million girls ages 15-19 will give birth. Worldwide, the proportion of women in parliament is only 22 per cent. These barriers prevent girls and women from realizing their inherent potential to lead. Yet, when there is investment in girls, they create positive impacts in their own lives, communities and countries. For example, when just 10 per cent more girls go to school, a country's GDP increases on average by three per cent.

International Day of the Girl falls annually on October 11, and is celebrating its fifth anniversary today. The day sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that girls experience around the world. Ms. Grégoire Trudeau was joined at the TSX by girls and young women who have been involved in the programming of FitSpirit/Fillactive, G(irls)20 and Plan International Canada. Representatives of corporate Canada were also present to show their support for girls and women in Canada and around the world.

### QUOTES

“ I am pleased to participate once again in the International Day of the Girl. I was here in Toronto for the first International Day of the Girl in 2012 and I am here today again because we still have a lot of work to do. Investing in girls is a key step in the fight for gender equality. It also gives us the opportunity to recognize that gender equality is not an issue faced by just half of the population, but by all. Private sector and government, men and women, young and old, we must all be in this together. Youth are not the leaders of tomorrow, but today. Let's empower our youngest leaders, and make sure that men are an active part of the solution. It is only with the full participation of all those actors that we will be able to give more women and girls the opportunity to reach their potential. This is the only way to create more respect and justice in our countries and worldwide” said Madame Sophie Grégoire Trudeau.

“I'm a firm believer that physical activity can be a powerful tool to bring young girls to surpass their limits,” Claudine Labelle said. “I've seen firsthand how formative an experience it can be. It teaches you a lot of important things like self-esteem, determination, and teamwork. It's certainly a mission we can all together really get behind! Today, the FitSpirit / Fillactive Foundation is proud to be part of this initiative for the International Day of the Girl as a partner organization. This partnership will help raise awareness of the importance for young girls to live healthy, active lifestyles. By building solid relationships with the various communities where girl programs are alive, I am confident we will be able to positively influence future of generations of young women.” Claudine Labelle, Founder & CEO, FitSpirit/Fillactive

“Investing in girls has huge economic and social benefits for everyone,” said Caroline Riseboro, President & CEO, Plan International Canada. “By removing the barriers preventing girls from going to school, gaining meaningful employment and protecting their health, we can help them to unlock their power and create a better, brighter future for themselves and those around them. On International Day of the Girl, we are urging all Canadians to get on the right side of history by investing in girls and removing the barriers that stand in the way of them living fair and fulfilling lives.” Caroline Riseboro, CEO, Plan International Canada

“Unlocking untapped potential in girls and women here in Canada and abroad is what G(irls)20 is all about. Opening the TSX on International Day of the Girl with a call for meaningful and sustained investment in girls is something that all individuals, corporations and governments can do; after all, who doesn’t want to make an investment where the dividends will continue to grow?” said Farah Mohamed, Founder & CEO, G(irls)20

“As a CEO, and as a father of three girls, I see firsthand the impact of investing in women. There are massive economic and social gains to be made by simply closing gender gaps and supporting female leadership and greater labour force participation” said Som Seif President & CEO Purpose Investments. “We know that when women are empowered, families thrive, communities are safer, and economies grow. At Purpose, we’re proud of our long-standing commitment to empowering women and girls and what we’ve achieved together with our partners.”

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#### **About FitSpirit / Fillactive**

FitSpirit / Fillactive is a foundation whose mission is to help teenage girls discover the advantages and fun of being active with friends. We believe this knowledge will allow them to develop a healthy lifestyle based on realizing their own potential. Since it was established in 2007, FitSpirit / Fillactive has helped more than 110,000 teenage girls in Quebec and Ontario get up and get moving. FitSpirit / Fillactive’s activities are made possible thanks to the support of its founding partners, Saputo and TELUS, as well as Québec en Forme, deployment partner in Québec and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, deployment partner in Ontario. For more information visit <http://www.fitspirit.ca/> Contact: Marie-Claude Gauthier-Fredette, Conseillère aux communications - division communautés, T:450.430.5322, poste 107 C: 438.868.1484 [marie-claude.gauthierf@fillactive.ca](mailto:marie-claude.gauthierf@fillactive.ca)

#### **About G(irls)20**

G(irls)20 is a Canadian based, globally active social profit enterprise with a laser focus on cultivating a new generation of female leadership through targeted investments in education, social entrepreneurship and global experiences. The organization places a great deal of effort in closing the gap between education and opportunity and features four flagship programs to enhance the skills and opportunities for girls and women around the world: an annual global summit to provide advice on female labour force participation to G20 Leaders, Bootcamp for Brains, Fathers Empowering Daughters and Girls on Boards. For more information visit [www.girls20.org](http://www.girls20.org) Contact: Isabella Goldberg Jussup, Coordinator, Communications, T: 514-713-5243 [communications@girls20.org](mailto:communications@girls20.org)

#### **About Plan International Canada and the Because I am a Girl movement**

Founded in 1937, Plan International is one of the world’s oldest and largest international development agencies, working in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty. Not for profit, independent and inclusive of all faiths and cultures, Plan International strives for a just world that advances children’s rights and equality for girls. **Because I am a Girl** is Plan International’s global movement to transform power relations so that girls everywhere can learn, lead, decide and thrive. Visit [plancanada.ca](http://plancanada.ca) and [becauseiamagirl.ca](http://becauseiamagirl.ca) for more information. Contact: Irene Whittaker-Cumming, Senior Manager, Communications, Plan International Canada, T: 416-920-1654 ext. 549, C: 647-284-9575 [IWhittakercumming@plancanada.ca](mailto:IWhittakercumming@plancanada.ca)