

Official Statement: Response to statements by French President, Macron

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Dr. Robert Walley, Executive Director of MaterCare International (Canada)

MATERCARE INTERNATIONAL RESPONDS TO #POSTCARDSFORMACRON MOVEMENT AND STATEMENTS BY FRENCH PRESIDENT

November 23, 2018- In a September speech made at the Gates Foundation's Goalkeepers Summit, French President Macron commented that mothers with large families, those with several or more children, have multiple children due to ignorance and lack of education, echoing the prevalent Western stigma against motherhood. MaterCare wishes to respond and highlight two troubling things with this statement.

The first is that women, for a vast variety of reasons, have a varying number of children. To state that any particular number of children is due to any one attribute is not only wrong, but incredibly offensive and insensitive to women and mothers who struggle daily to either conceive or carry to term their children. There are women today who would have chosen to have more children, but often for medical reasons simply cannot. The French president's statement, at the very least, should be followed by an apology to women and mothers everywhere based on this issue alone.

Secondly, family size trends change from country to country, community to community, and household to household. Mothers with large families are not one monolithic group, just as mothers on the whole are not one monolithic group. Large families have been culturally the norm for generations in many countries, and many successful and educated families, including those in Canada, the United States and Europe, are included in this tradition. To state that large families is a signifier of ignorance or lack of education not only insults mothers who have specifically decided to have many children, but also adds to the decline in the value of motherhood on a rampant rise in Western society. The treatment of mothers and children, the vulnerable populations in our communities, is the benchmark of a society's moral integrity.

MaterCare International supports mothers and their children, regardless of their family size, and we hope that world leaders can not only learn from these women and their families, but also support them and provide them with the resources they so desperately need in order to successfully conceive, deliver and parent their children. We would encourage President Macron to offer an apology to women and mothers, for his lack of understanding and perspective that the #PostcardsforMacron movement has undoubtedly helped him to reconsider.

Dr. Robert Walley, Executive Director
MaterCare International
Email: info@matercare.org
Phone: (709) 749-3826