



## **The Sustainable Menstrual Equity Coalition Welcomes the Selection of Food Banks Canada to Run the Menstrual Equity Fund Pilot Program.**

September 21, 2023 – OTTAWA, ON – The Sustainable Menstrual Equity Coalition in Canada (SMEC) congratulates Food Banks Canada for being selected to administer the Menstrual Equity Fund (MEF) pilot project and look forward to working with both Food Banks Canada and the Federal Government to address period poverty and ensure that Canada continues its leadership in sustainable menstrual equity.

“Sadly, period poverty in Canada and in the world is on the rise”, said Leisa Hirtz, CEO of Women's Global Health Innovations (bfree cup). “Programs such as the MEF pilot are critical steps in as a first step in addressing menstrual gaps in Canada.”

The lack of access to menstrual hygiene products, education, and facilities, often due to financial constraints, access to preferred products, geographic location, clean water, safe washroom space, and personal trauma make it difficult for some Canadians to fully access products and participate in day-to-day essential activities.

“We have learned through our decades of experience with supporting Canadians with access to safe, effective, eco-friendly menstrual care products that to achieve universal menstrual equity, it is going to take more than providing an endless supply of traditional plastic-based disposable products” said Suzanne Siemens and Madeleine Shaw, Co-Founders of Aisle.

Offering sustainable disposable and reusable options is the most effective long-term solution to period poverty and meeting our country's environmental goals. Offering cost-effective sustainable products alongside conventional disposables has significant benefits such as financial savings, GHG reduction and waste reduction. Further benefits include better mental health/peace of mind for Canadians, thanks to reliable access and appropriate product choice.

“SMEC member companies are here to offer products and resources based on deep experience to help Food Banks Canada and the Federal Government deliver solutions for all Canadians,” said Linda Biggs, co-CEO of joni. “Canada has an opportunity to be a leader in menstrual equity initiatives by partnering with SMEC companies that offer eco-friendly pads and tampons as well as reusable cups, cloth pads and period underwear in advancing access from coast to coast to coast.”

### **About the Sustainable Menstrual Equity Coalition**

The Sustainable Menstrual Equity Coalition is a national private coalition of women-led companies in Canada that specialize in sustainable menstrual care products, solutions and education. SMEC members include Canadian-led women SMEs Aisle, joni and Women's Global Health Innovations (Bfree cup).

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