

PM speaking notes for 20th October presser

20 October 2020

Bonjour à tous. Good morning, everyone.

I'm happy to be here with Deputy Prime Minister Freeland and Minister Ng, as well as Dr. Tam and Dr. Njoo.

[Pause]

Canada has now passed a total of 200,000 cases of COVID-19 since the spring, with almost 22,000 active cases across the country today.

Here, and around the world, the fight against this virus is far from over.

And to win it, we have to keep working together.

Canada is a big country, and the pandemic is playing out differently in different provinces and territories.

That's why I'm asking everyone to keep following the guidelines of their local public health authorities.

This is a Team Canada effort - and when you wear a mask, limit your in-person close contacts, and use the free COVID Alert app - you're doing your part.

As a government, we're doing ours, too.

Since March, we've received almost 800 million pieces of personal protective equipment - masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields - to protect frontline workers and Canadians.

This month alone, we've distributed over 20 million pieces of PPE to the provinces and territories.

And we're continuing to work around the clock to ship even more to the frontlines.

[Pause]

While we are doing everything we can to keep Canadians healthy, we continue to work hard to keep our economy healthy as well.

This week is Small Business Week.

This is an opportunity to recognize the enormous contribution that small businesses make to our country.

Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to speak with several entrepreneurs, as well as business leaders, who have shared their suggestions and concerns with me.

Because small businesses are central to our communities, our government supports them.

We are there for people like Charles-Ugo Boucher of Café Larue, in my riding of Papineau, for whom the extension of the wage subsidy will allow him to keep employees.

With the onset of winter, many business owners hope that they will not have fewer customers if they have to line up outside in the cold.

For small business owners in need, there is the following:

The wage subsidy, the new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy that goes directly to business tenants, and the Canadian Business Emergency Account are programs that are there for you.

You are demonstrating resilience and creativity, and our government will continue to support you innovatively.

[Pause]

Small businesses are the heart of our communities, and the backbone of our economy.

During Small Business Week, I want to take a moment to recognize the hard work and perseverance that so many people put in every day, and especially over the last 6 months.

Whether you've adapted your menu to make take-out easier, or used your 3D printers to manufacture PPE, your resilience and creativity is an inspiration.

As a government, our goal is to help you and your employees, through this tough time.

From the beginning of this crisis, we took immediate and significant action to help Canadian businesses keep their door open and their workers on the job.

Recently, I spoke with many small business owners that shared their experience with me.

Dr. Hedy Fry introduced me to Lisa Arthurs, owner of Quick Nickel Clothing in Vancouver's West End, for whom the new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy could provide direct help as she continues to work hard to keep her business running.

Of course, the extended wage subsidy and the expanded Canada Emergency Business Account are also there to help.

Moving forward, we will continue to listen to the needs of small businesses, just like we listen to the needs of all Canadians.

We'll be there for people, whatever it takes, as long as it takes.

[Pause]

Unfortunately, our fight against COVID-19 is not over, and we must continue to be guided by the local public health authorities.

Wear a mask, download the free COVID Alert app, and limit your contact with others.

And while you're all working together to slow the spread of the virus, why not encourage small businesses in your neighbourhood to mark Small Business Week by ordering a meal at a local eatery, or by buying a gift card at your favourite store.

[Pause]

I want to end this morning by taking a moment to talk about the Community Resilience Fund, which supports partnerships and innovation in countering online radicalization to violence.

The pandemic has increased the amount of time we spend in front of our screens.

And while the digital space is powerful, it's not without issues.

Online hate is far too common, and all too often it can spill over into real life.

Better understanding violent extremism is key to preventing radicalization to violence, so that we can stop tragedies before they happen.

So far, the Community Resilience Fund has supported 39 projects across the country with a total of over \$29 million.

Today, I can announce that we will invest in the YWCA Canada's project, Block Hate: Building Resilience against Online Hate Speech.

This is an important project, and I know it will help keep our communities safe.

To all the groups and local leaders who are part of this fund: thank you for your vital work.

Thank you.

I will now turn it over to Minister Ng.