

June 7, 2019

Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard  
Chairperson, Standing Committee on Human Rights  
Senate of Canada

Dear Senator Bernard and Members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights,

I am pleased to submit for your consideration the attached brief prepared by Inter Pares' counterpart DEMUS (*Estudio para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer*). DEMUS is a Peruvian feminist organization that defends human rights, particularly, women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Inter Pares has supported DEMUS for many years with its own funding and, up until 2015, with funds from Global Affairs Canada.

DEMUS has been at the forefront of the struggle to expose the truth of what happened to hundreds of thousands of Peruvian women who are survivors and/or victims of forced sterilizations in the 1990s and to hold the Peruvian state to account for its actions. The attached brief by DEMUS provides an account of various advocacy initiatives undertaken – initiatives that eventually resulted in the Peruvian government acknowledging its responsibility and establishing a national registry for victims of forced sterilizations.

Inter Pares continues to support the work of DEMUS to accompany survivors of forced sterilizations in Peru in their quest for truth, justice and reparations. At the same time, as a Canadian organization, we are profoundly disturbed by reports of forced sterilizations – most notably of Indigenous women and women with disabilities – in our own country.

In April 2019, we invited the Director of DEMUS, Ms. Maria Ysabel Cedano, to Canada for an exchange. The visit provided an important opportunity to share lessons learned from the Peruvian experience with Canadian Indigenous, Inuit and other civil society organizations. Some of these organizations have provided testimony to the Standing Committee on Human Rights. During her visit, Ms. Cedano also had the opportunity to share her expertise with Senator Yvonne Boyer and staff from various senators' offices during a presentation on April 30.

**Inter Pares wishes to reinforce DEMUS' recommendation for the Standing Committee on Human Rights to consider undertaking a mission to Peru to learn first-hand about the experience of forced or coerced sterilizations in that country. Peruvian civil society organizations and government institutions have been working on this issue for a number of years and we believe that such an exchange would provide valuable insights and lessons learned – both positive and negative – that will assist the Canadian government as it seeks to respond to the crisis in our own country. Such a visit would enable committee members to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and impact of forced or coerced sterilizations. It**

**would also enable the committee to learn about the significance of the national registry from the perspective of government officials, civil society organizations, and most importantly from survivors of forced sterilizations.**

Inter Pares would be pleased to assist the Standing Committee on Human Rights in developing an agenda, facilitating contacts in Peru (both in Lima and in the highland regions) and contributing in other ways as needed to ensure that such a mission would be fruitful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Fairbairn".

Bill Fairbairn  
Program Manager,  
Inter Pares