



# A VIEW FROM ONTARIO: IMPROVING CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW SUBMISSION

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## Preamble

The Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC) hosted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Symposium on June 16, 2016. Entitled “Ontarians & the World: Universality Matters,” the Symposium looked at the role of Canada and Ontario in contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognizing the interconnected and integrated nature of the SDGs and their universal nature. It was grounded in a recognition that the SDG framework should underpin Canada’s approach to international assistance with priorities linked directly to all 17 SDGs, given their integrated nature. The universal nature of the SDGs also means that they apply equally to Canada and Ontario’s domestic policies. In this context, the Symposium explored opportunities for collective impact and examined the potential role of OCIC to serve as a backbone in the province of Ontario to convene spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue and action, including through collaboration with Ontario municipalities, colleges, universities and diaspora groups. In short, it aimed to identify opportunities for a whole of Ontario approach to sustainable development going forward. It also looked at the role of Global Affairs Canada to support collective impact across Canada in a similar fashion.

A key theme highlighted by distinguished speakers and participants alike was the need for Canada to adopt a holistic approach to international cooperation that includes aid and non-aid policies and works in collaboration with a diversity of Canadians to realize collective impact.

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, welcomed the timely event, noting that it resonates with the two key themes that guide her work: 1) sustainability, and 2) Ontario in the world. The Lieutenant Governor outlined the scale of sustainable development challenges facing Ontario and the world, recognizing the need for collective action. She noted that the SDGs, Canada’s 150th birthday, and ongoing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada call for a critical reflection on Canada and Ontario’s vision for the future. She called for action to overcome the powerful momentum towards mediocrity in the face of the scale of changes needed to address sustainable development challenges.

In her presentation, *Towards 2030: Building Canada's Engagement with Global Sustainable Development*,<sup>1</sup> Margaret Biggs, Skelton-Clark Fellow at Queen’s University, argued that the traditional view of international development as something that happens “over there” is long out-dated. It is time for a Canadian approach to international cooperation that recognizes the interconnected nature of Canada’s security, prosperity and physical well-being with progress on global sustainable development. Canada is lagging behind its peers on nearly all measures of engagement with developing and emerging economies, including in the areas of international education, trade, official development assistance and contributions to peacekeeping. She called for a whole-of-Canada approach to international cooperation going forward with government at all levels, knowledge generators and educators, the private sector, including philanthropy, civil society and citizens contributing.

Helle Banks Jørgenson, Head of the Global Compact Network Canada, emphasized the need for a more joined up approach to international cooperation that considers aid and non-aid policies, such as trade and investment, and promotes collaboration between all stakeholders to realize shared objectives, including by harnessing the private sector. Dr. Alexandra Conliffe, Vice President of Operations at Engineers Without Borders Canada, noted that all stakeholders have a role to play in realizing the SDGs and highlighted the special role of civil society in particular. Though civil society organizations (CSOs) are not a substitute for government or the private sector, they can take risks and be innovative, testing solutions to sustainable development challenges, adopting iterative approaches, and learning. In this sense, CSOs can

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.cips-cepi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CIPS-development-final-web-EN.pdf>.

de-risk innovation and partner with governments and the private sector when it is time to bring a successful innovations to scale.

Finally, Annie Demirjian, Director of the Glendon School of Public & International Affairs at York University, provided insights on Canada's role in the context of humanitarian crises and peacekeeping operations. She too called for a comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach that links short-term efforts to longer-term development. She emphasized the importance of working in partnership with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions as no one entity can deliver on everything in conflict and post-conflict situations. In addition to focusing on local institutions and actors, Professor Demirjian argued that a whole-of-society approach means engaging with the Canadian private sector, diaspora groups, civil society, academia and others to collaborate and work jointly through a multi-disciplinary approach to identify and deliver on solutions.

The Symposium was characterized by a conversation on bigger dreams and better, more transformative collaboration. It is time for Canada and Ontario to dream bigger and work together to realise collective impact towards the SDGs.

## Introduction

On May 18, 2016, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, launched a public review and consultation of Canada's international assistance policy and funding framework. The International Assistance Review (IAR) will inform how Canada can best refocus its international assistance on the poorest and most vulnerable people and support fragile states. It will also shape Canada's approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As part of the IAR the Minister is placing a special emphasis on the rights of women and girls, and plans to apply a feminist approach to Canada's international assistance activities going forward. The IAR is based on six thematic pillars:

- Health and rights of women and children;
- Clean economic growth and climate change;
- Governance, pluralism, diversity and human rights;
- Peace and security;
- Responding to humanitarian crises and the needs of displaced populations; and
- Delivering results, with a focus on improving effectiveness and transparency, innovation and partnerships.<sup>2</sup>

OCIC welcomes the IAR. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement on climate change point to the need for urgent action by Canada and others to address global sustainable development challenges. The IAR presents a timely opportunity for Canada to re-examine its role in the world and how it can best contribute to sustainable development at home and abroad through a collaborative approach that engages all Canadians. The IAR also offers Canada an opportunity to set out a clear action plan that outlines immediate steps and longer term priorities to address urgent global sustainable development challenges.

This report presents OCIC's submission to the IAR. OCIC is an expanding community of Ontario-based international development and global education and individual associate members working globally for social justice. As part of its AGM & Symposium, OCIC hosted a consultation in Toronto to solicit views

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/development-developpement/iar-consultations-eai/document.aspx?lang=eng>

from OCIC members on the IAR. The consultation was attended by over 110 representatives from civil society, academia, research centres, diaspora groups and Global Affairs Canada.

The consultation was designed to solicit feedback from participants through roundtable discussions addressing federal government and OCIC consultation priorities (Box 1). Participants had an opportunity to provide feedback on the six pillars of the IAR through two roundtable discussion sessions. In addition, roundtable sessions were also dedicated to OCIC priority areas, namely how OCIC members can better engage diaspora groups as well as municipalities,<sup>3</sup> colleges and universities in international cooperation, particularly to realize collective impact towards the SDGs.

### Box 1. OCIC consultation for the International Assistance Review

This submission, prepared by Shannon Kindornay, Adjunct Research Professor, Norman Patterson School of International Affairs in collaboration with OCIC, is informed by the views of over 110 individuals representing CSOs, diaspora communities, academia, research institutions and interested individuals from Ontario. In advance of the consultation, participants were provided with information on the IAR, including the GAC consultation discussion paper. For the consultation, participants were invited to participate in two 40 minute roundtable sessions, guided by the key questions posed for the IAR, as well as specific questions on the role of diaspora groups, municipalities, colleges and universities in international cooperation. Following the report back from the roundtables, Elissa Golberg, Assistant Deputy Minister, Partnerships for Development Innovation, Global Affairs Canada, provided reflections on the key themes arising from the consultation.

The OCIC submission informs the submission by the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils (ICN),<sup>4</sup> of which OCIC is a member. The ICN submission was reviewed by Councils and their members across Canada through an online survey carried out from July 13-20, 2016. Feedback from OCIC members as part of the ICN review process informs this submission. In addition, the OCIC submission was shared with OCIC members for verification and final feedback.

The OCIC submission provides an overview of the key messages arising from the consultation. **It sets out ten key recommendations arising from across the roundtable discussions. The remainder of the submission is structured around each of the six pillars in the IAR, followed by a specific focus on the roles of diaspora groups, colleges and universities, in international cooperation. It includes a series of specific recommendations that respond to the questions outlined by the IAR discussion paper.**

<sup>3</sup> Owing to limited municipality representation, feedback from participants focused largely on the roles of colleges and universities.

<sup>4</sup> The ICN is a coalition of the eight Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation. These member-based Councils are committed to global social justice and social change, and represent almost 400 diverse civil society organizations (CSOs) from across Canada. The ICN provides a national forum in which the Councils collaborate for improved effectiveness and identify common priorities for collective action. Rooted in communities across Canada, the Councils are leaders in public engagement at a local and regional level and are recognized for bringing regional knowledge and priorities to the national level.

## Overarching Recommendations

### **1. Canada should clearly articulate an integrated and human rights-based approach to international cooperation that recognizes linkages across the key domains in which Canada aims to contribute.**

The themes in the IAR are interconnected. Progress on social, economic and environmental outcomes is interdependent as outlined in the SDGs. Women's rights are linked to all thematic areas of work, as well as in the design, delivery and implementation of programs. Climate change, economic growth and governance are linked to conflict, peace and security, and humanitarian crises. The outcome of the IAR should include a set of policies for Canada's international cooperation priorities with links between policies and the SDGs set out, including in terms of implications for programming. Canada's priorities should work to support all 17 SDGs; the interconnected nature of the sustainable development challenges means that no one SDG can be realized without progress on all SDGs.

In supporting the SDGs, Canada should take a human rights-based approach to international assistance by focusing on poverty reduction and reducing inequalities, in particular for the poorest and most marginalized. Gender equality, environmental sustainability and climate change are important priorities individually and are also integral to the realization of results in all areas of programming. The human rights-based approach also means linking policies and approaches to the international human rights framework, including but not limited to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **2. Canada's approach to international cooperation must include and go beyond the aid portfolio.**

It no longer makes sense to refer to international development policies; rather, Canada's focus should be on international cooperation. The merger of trade, foreign policy and development portfolios in Global Affairs Canada offers an opportunity for Canada to situate international assistance within the broader context of Canada's international cooperation. There is a need for Global Affairs Canada to articulate a coherent international cooperation policy that includes development, trade and diplomacy. In this context, policy coherence for development is critical. Across the IAR pillars, inconsistencies between development, trade and foreign policies hinder Canada's development work. Canada's international cooperation policy should articulate how Canada is contributing to effective development and how Canada's international cooperation aligns with principles for effective development cooperation in practice.

### **3. Canada should work with a diverse range of partners including small, medium and large CSOs, youth, women's rights groups, diaspora communities, educational institutions, community associations, the private sector, and others across Canada.**

The ambition to engage more with Canadians on international cooperation needs to be backed by financial and non-financial mechanisms to facilitate engagement. This means the development of new tools and approaches that target key stakeholders in international cooperation as knowledge partners, experts, and programming partners. This includes actively supporting small, medium and large CSOs, youth, women's rights groups, diaspora communities, education institutions, community associations, local governments, private sector firms and organizations and other partners, both in Canada and abroad. To this effect, there are a number of steps Global Affairs Canada can take.

First, Global Affairs Canada should prepare a strategy to effectively implement its Civil Society Partnership Policy. This plan should include an articulation of how the Ministry will strengthen partnerships with CSOs across Canada and abroad through financial and non-financial support, and target engagement with key stakeholder groups identified in the policy. Second, there is a need to develop a clear policy to appropriately engage private industry in international cooperation and promote cross-sector collaboration. Third, ambitions to engage youth in international cooperation will need to be matched by an effective strategy and funding. Global Affairs Canada should consider ways to reach youth by working in partnership with education institutions, the Provincial and Regional Councils and other CSOs, providing enhanced support for youth internships, and supporting a range of public engagement programmes and initiatives. Finally, Global Affairs Canada's current portfolio focuses heavily on multilateral institutions as implementing partners. There is a need to consider the balance and predictability of funding between multilateral and all other partners to enable a greater diversity and range of organizations to contribute to Canada's international cooperation.

#### **4. Canada should focus on local ownership and knowledge.**

The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) includes provisions to ensure that Canada's aid is informed by the perspectives of the poor. The IAR offers an opportunity to further translate the ODAAA into policies and programming by supporting communities to define their own challenges and solutions. Canadian small and medium-sized CSOs will be critical contributors to achieving this objective given their partner-led, multi-faceted relationships with counterparts in developing countries.

#### **5. Canada should focus on supporting the poorest and most marginalized communities.**

Canada has set the ambition of focusing its international assistance on the poorest and the most marginalized. This ambition aligns with the global focus on eradicating extreme poverty and ensuring that no one is left behind in the SDGs. Canada's ambition means supporting the poorest and most marginalized in the communities in which they live, regardless of whether they live in low or middle-income countries. Moreover, Canada should clearly articulate the groups it aims to support in humanitarian, peace and security and development programming, and make clear who is meant by the poorest and most marginalized. These include, for example, women and girls, people with disabilities, Indigenous communities, LGBTQ communities, religious minorities and others. In this context, Canada's approach should be participatory with efforts guided by the needs identified by people and organizations in partner countries, and local partners and communities supported as change agents for realizing solutions.

#### **6. Canada should immediately invest in public engagement and education on international cooperation.**

There is a need for greater and immediate commitment to support transformational public engagement and education on international cooperation, including through volunteerism, if the Canadian government aims to engage more Canadians in international cooperation. Canada should establish a formalized High Level Working Group on public engagement and mechanisms to support public engagement consultations with inputs from all regions of Canada. By 2017, Canada should prepare a comprehensive public engagement policy and strategy as an integral component of Canada's international cooperation program. The strategy should elaborate a theory of change and be supported by common metrics to help increase collective understanding of Global Affairs Canada priorities and impact. It should also include a range of partners - small, medium and large CSOs, education institutions and others - to reach a diversity of Canadians in all regions of the country. Dedicated funding should be available for standalone public

engagement programs, including longitudinal research on the impact of public engagement, as well as for the inclusion of public engagement components in all development projects and programs. There should also be opportunities for national public education programs on topics that are broader than any one organization's mandate, such as the SDGs. Underpinning the public engagement strategy should be an emphasis on supporting cultural and knowledge exchanges between Canadians and individuals in other countries, in particular youth, Indigenous, marginalized and diaspora communities to underline the concept of universality behind the SDGs and Canada's new approach to international cooperation.

#### **7. Canada should take a long term, predictable, flexible and mutually accountable approach to international cooperation.**

Under all IAR pillars there is a need for long-term, predictable, flexible and mutually accountable funding. The prioritization of local community needs and perspectives necessitates an approach to funding that is reliable for communities over the longer term (as development results take time) but also allows for flexibility when circumstances change in country. This means ensuring consistent, sustained funding through predictable mechanisms that support development activities.

Special attention is needed to facilitate engagement by a wide range of stakeholders, including small and medium-sized CSOs. Global Affairs Canada should establish responsive funding mechanisms in this regard and take a flexible approach to match-funding requirements to ensure that smaller organizations are able to contribute to international cooperation. In sum, more opportunities should be made available to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders can effectively engage in international cooperation.

#### **8. Canada should balance supporting innovation and more 'traditional' approaches to international cooperation, including by harnessing Canadian strengths.**

The emphasis on innovation in the IAR discussion paper is welcome, however there is a need to continue support for development efforts that have a history of success alongside new innovations. A portfolio that includes funding for innovative approaches to international cooperation and a focus on what has worked in the past and is continuing to work is critical. This balanced approach, which Global Affairs Canada is taking in the context of maternal, newborn and child health, should inform efforts in all areas that Canada seeks to realize sustainable development results.

Canada's approach to international cooperation should also harness Canadian capacities and expertise. For example, Canada has a history of work in peacekeeping, police training, women's empowerment and maternal, newborn and child health. These capacities and expertise should be maintained and harnessed as Canada moves forward with a new approach to international cooperation.

#### **9. Canada should invest in the production and use of better data.**

Data gaps, including in the area of monitoring and evaluation, undermine progress on development. For all IAR pillars there is a need for better data to inform policy and programming, as well as for greater access to existing data to facilitate learning across development partners. For its part, Global Affairs Canada should invest in data systems in partner countries and provide funds for monitoring and evaluation as part of its support for projects and programs. Ensuring that data is available on how all communities, including the most marginalized such as people with disabilities, Indigenous communities and others, benefit from progress is critical to supporting the leave no one behind agenda in the SDGs. It should also work to better disseminate data arising from evaluations to partners.

## **10. Canada should promote learning within Global Affairs Canada and among partners.**

The need to learn from different approaches across social, environmental and economic sectors, stakeholders within Canada and abroad, and from past successes and failures was a key theme arising from the consultation. Global Affairs Canada should play a greater role in terms of supporting knowledge sharing within Canada and in terms of bringing lessons from partner countries to Canada as a means to improve best practices and promote greater collaboration between organizations. A number of options exist for establishing spaces for collaboration, coordination and lessons learning. Global Affairs Canada, organizations like OCIC and other partners could play an important convening role. Efforts could include the establishment of an annual forum and more frequent smaller roundtables to bring together different types of organizations including CSOs, women's rights groups, diaspora associations, colleges, universities and others. There is a need for the government to make use of national, regional and thematic fora to also solicit views on government policy. Face-to-face meetings could be complemented by the establishment of a virtual platform to promote resource and information sharing as well as serve as a repository of information on development partner activities.

## **Health and Rights of Women and Children**

### **Canada should consult with stakeholders on the adoption of a feminist approach to international assistance and clearly articulate what the approach means in practice moving forward.**

OCIC members noted the government's proposal to adopt a feminist approach to international assistance and look forward to further consultation on the approach. There is a need for Canada to clearly articulate what a feminist approach means in practice, and how it will address patriarchy, power structures and intersecting forms of discrimination, including but not limited to gender, race, ability, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status. Gender equality should be understood within the context of multiple sexual identities. The adoption of a feminist approach should promote critical reflection by Global Affairs Canada and its partners on how international cooperation will occur differently in the future and how it will address the underlying and root causes of discrimination and inequality.

### **Gender equality should continue to be a cross cutting priority for Global Affairs Canada development programming as well as targeted through specific programs.**

Global Affairs Canada should focus on gender equality and gender equity in its approach. All projects and programs should be subject to gender-based analysis. This means substantively examining and addressing gendered dimensions of international cooperation initiatives, and critically analyzing intersectionality and existing institutions and structures in terms of their effectiveness in reducing inequalities and leaving no one behind.

### **Canada should invest in women and women's rights groups directly.**

Canada has a history of investing in efforts to realize women's rights and gender equality, including through support for women's rights groups in local communities. There is a need for Canada to reinvest in women's rights groups that have the capacity to spearhead gender equality efforts in the countries in which Canada works. In addition to supporting local women's rights groups, Canada could work more closely with UN Women.

Canada should also invest in the issues that impact women's ability to meaningfully participate in development. This means supporting women and girl's empowerment broadly, and addressing critical



issues including sexual health and reproductive rights, health systems, nutrition, education and social and cultural practices that are harmful to women and girls such as early and forced child marriage and female genital mutilation. Investing in women also means addressing the critical role of men and boys in realizing gender equality outcomes. A holistic approach is needed that includes women, men, girls and boys as stakeholders in realizing gender equality.

**Canada should focus on systems and less on vertical programming.**

Canada's efforts to promote the rights of women and girls should be situated within the context of approaches aimed at improving the overall social, economic and environmental systems in which people live. Though vertical programming is important for addressing key issue areas, for example the eradication of specific diseases and viruses, Canada should focus its efforts on up-stream programs, such as improving overall health system to delivery basic immunization for children as they grow. Canada's continued focus on maternal, newborn and child health remains important and should be situated within the context of efforts to support overall health systems to the benefit of all groups in partner countries.

**Canada should invest in youth from education to job creation.**

Canada should invest in youth with an emphasis on child protection and education from primary education to secondary and post-secondary education, especially for girls. Entrepreneurial education and technical and vocational skills training, such as through cooperative education programs, are important in this regard. Canada should prioritize youth engagement and participation in the countries in which it works, encouraging youth to be part of program implementation and to be engaged as active citizens in their own communities' development.

## **Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change**

**Canada should make environmental sustainability and climate change a key focus of international cooperation efforts.**

Given their integrated nature, economic and environmental prosperity must be addressed hand in hand. This reality is well recognized in the SDGs. Environmental sustainability and climate change should not be a cross-cutting theme, but rather an integral part of the lens through which Canada approaches international cooperation.

**Canada should draw on Canadian advantages and best practices to inform international cooperation programming.**

Canada has a history of promoting sustainable economic growth through support to the cooperative movement internationally. This approach to sustainable economic growth should continue and be strengthened. In addition, Canada's international cooperation programming would benefit by drawing on Canadian strengths in areas such as environmental standards and regulations. Canada can focus on knowledge transfer programs that harness appropriate Canadian approaches and technologies to the benefit of partner countries.

**Canada should match private sector partnerships to realize clean economic growth and address climate change with support for appropriate legal and policy frameworks.**

Partnerships with the private sector have potential to improve economic and environmental outcomes. However, these efforts should be appropriately matched by a focus on appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks in Canada, abroad and at the global level to address climate change. For example, Canada could support social entrepreneurship in Canada and in partner countries through steps to promote greater imports of fair trade and organic products, notably through tariff exemptions.

## Governance, Pluralism, Diversity and Human Rights

**The universal nature of the SDGs means that progress in Canada impacts Canadian leadership abroad.**

Canada can play a prominent role in supporting the realization of better governance, respect for pluralism and diversity and the promotion of human rights abroad. However, as a universal agenda, the SDGs apply equally to Canada and are about efforts at home and abroad. There is a need for Canada to examine its own progress in the areas of gender equality, poverty, indigenous rights and the rights of people with disabilities to ensure that Canada has the credibility to lead on these issues globally.

**Canada should support the production of better data in partner countries.**

The need to improve the availability and quality of official statistics in many partner countries to support the realization of the SDGs is well-established. Canada is already making investments in civil and vital registration systems in partner countries – a critical building block for good statistics. Canada also has a world-renowned statistical system and is known for its high quality data. Going forward, Canada should invest in developing country statistical systems, including efforts to monitor and evaluate development projects and programs, drawing on Canadian expertise, particularly from Statistics Canada. Canada can support efforts to leave no one behind under the SDGs by ensuring that the most marginalized communities, in particular people with disabilities and Indigenous communities, are counted.

**Canada should promote civic engagement.**

Canada should support and facilitate civic engagement in partner countries. This work could include two key components, among others. First, Canada can support youth groups with linkages to the government institutions as well as those that aim to empower youth to engage on civic issues. Second, Canada can support networks of local CSOs to effectively engage in political and policy discussions.

**Canada should support electoral processes.**

Canada has a history of support for electoral processes in partner countries. Canada should continue and strengthen its support to other governments, drawing on existing experience and expertise.

## Peace and Security

**Canada should clearly establish links between humanitarian aid and Canada's efforts to promote peace and security.**

There is a clear link between Canada's humanitarian aid programming and peacebuilding efforts. Canada needs to consider how it will engage in fragile and conflict-affected states over the long term moving from addressing humanitarian needs in times of conflict to peacebuilding and restoration. The policies that emerge as a result of the IAR should effectively link these two areas, including a clear articulation of how and where Canada will link humanitarian aid and peacebuilding efforts.

**Canada should improve coordination on peace and security programming.**

Humanitarian response, peace and security and broader development agendas are invariably linked. There is a need to facilitate coordination between like-minded countries and partners, CSOs, the private sector and others to ensure that activities reinforce and do not duplicate efforts in country.

**Canada should localize peace and security efforts through meaningful partnerships with local communities.**

Large scale efforts to promote peace and security need to be linked to community-level initiatives. Local communities should be empowered to provide direction on their needs, stimulating peace through development with relationships and partnerships based on transparency, responsiveness, and equity. In this context, inclusivity is important. Women, youth, and people with disabilities should be meaningfully involved. Consultation and partnerships should be sufficiently backed by long-term and flexible funding to realize progress on priorities identified by communities. Given their extensive and multi-faceted links to local communities, Canadian small and medium-sized CSOs should be supported to contribute to the localization of Canada's peace and security efforts.

## Responding to Humanitarian Crises and the Needs of Displaced Populations

**Canada requires a transparent humanitarian response policy framework.**

Historically, there has been a lack of clarity and transparency in terms of Canada's approach to humanitarian crises in terms of policies and programming. The IAR offers an opportunity to establish a clear and transparent humanitarian response policy framework that: 1) articulates when Canada will contribute to addressing humanitarian crises; 2) how Canada will provide support both in terms of funding arrangements and according to humanitarian principles; and 3) Canada's approach to targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups.

**Canada should prioritize local responses to humanitarian crises.**

Local communities respond to humanitarian crises in diverse ways and through the use of existing support systems. There is a need to prioritize their voices and approaches in Canada's response to humanitarian crises. In this context, local partners, CSOs and other actors are key players, many of which partner with Canadian CSOs. Assistance should be delivered by organizations that are best placed to meet community needs and have legitimacy to operate on the ground.

## Delivering Results

**Canada should improve the accessibility, flexibility and predictability of official development assistance.**

The need to ensure predictability in funding to partner countries and other development partners is well established as an important principle for effective development cooperation. There should be greater predictability in Canadian funding to partner organizations. Predictable funding facilitates capacity development, strategic engagement and planning, and ensures that international partners have reliable support. In this context, it is also critical that long term funding be made less restrictive and more flexible, enabling organizations to adapt their approaches when changes in country context arise. Funding mechanisms should balance fairness with effectiveness, recognize the diverse roles that small and medium-sized CSOs play, and be designed according to organizational experience, sector, and good practices. Diverse funding mechanisms, including calls for proposals, partnership agreements, core funding, and project funding, among others, should aim to promote policy dialogue, build capacity, work in targeted geographic regions and support public engagement activities in Canada.

Funding should also be accessible. This means simplifying funding procedures and reporting structures. For example, application processes could be more made efficient and effective through a pre-selection stage before requiring full program design and Global Affairs Canada could update its guidelines and manuals to align with its new approach. Moreover, through the IAR the government has noted the importance of engaging with more Canadians in international cooperation. However, the current funding structures tend to limit possibilities for small and medium-sized CSOs to effectively contribute to international cooperation. As noted in a recent ICN study on the contributions of small and medium-sized CSOs as development actors,<sup>5</sup> such organizations tend to be specialized, well-connected and flexible. They also operate across large cities and rural communities across Canada and directly reach and engage with Canadians. More opportunities should be made available to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders can effectively engage in international cooperation.

**Canada should support innovation through a measured approach that allows for risk taking, flexibility and scaling success.**

Though Global Affairs Canada is currently supporting innovation and has demonstrated willingness to take on risks, for example in the area of maternal, newborn and child health, Canada should consider further adopting a strategic, phased approach to promoting innovation. Under this approach, Global Affairs Canada could provide initial funding to test innovations, and support larger scale implementation for successful approaches. Innovation funding mechanisms should be predictable, accessible, flexible and responsive to changes on the ground.

**Canada should see partnership as a relationship, not a contract.**

There is a significant focus on partnership in the IAR. While this emphasis is welcome, the current system of partnership will need to evolve. Currently, organizations engage in contractual relationships in which they are largely accountable to Global Affairs Canada. Though organizations should continue to be accountable for taxpayers' dollars there is a need to expand partnerships to long-term relationships that move beyond one-off projects or programs, based on mutual learning, respect and shared responsibility for results.

**Canada should promote mutual accountability and transparency in international cooperation.**

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://ocic.on.ca/content/study-smos-their-operations-funding-and-impact#overlay-context=>

There is a need for organizations to be accountable to both donors and the communities in which organizations work. Global Affairs Canada can promote mutual accountability by ensuring greater transparency in its operations as well as those of the organizations its supports. Global Affairs Canada is in a position to promote good development practice, including civil society principles for development effectiveness,<sup>6</sup> by selecting partners that have adopted principles to ensure transparency and accountability in their operations.

## Engaging with Diaspora Communities, Colleges and Universities in International Cooperation

**Canada should engage diaspora communities more effectively in international cooperation.**

In 2015 the Canadian government undertook a consultation on how to better engage diaspora (“cultural community”) groups in international cooperation. To this effect, OCIC co-hosted a consultation in Toronto at which participants identified a number of key areas for Global Affairs Canada to more effectively engage with diaspora communities.<sup>7</sup> The IAR consultation reaffirmed the need for Global Affairs Canada to better engage with diaspora communities and highlighted a number of action areas, consistent with the findings from the 2015 consultation.

A key challenge to effectively engaging with diaspora communities in Canada is the lack of baseline research regarding the activities that diaspora communities currently undertake, and their priorities going forward. Diaspora engagement in international cooperation should be informed by applied research with the aim of identifying the types of contributions diaspora groups can make to international cooperation, potential areas for collaboration, and strategic entry points for engagement, particularly given the diverse nature of diaspora communities in Canada.

It is also difficult for diaspora groups to access funding to support their efforts in international cooperation. Many organizations are small and only require small amounts of funding to harness contributions from the private sector, including members of diaspora communities. A small fund to support the work of diaspora organizations in international cooperation should be established.

Finally, the Canadian government can play a role in facilitating dialogue with and between diaspora communities on international cooperation, providing a space for groups to engage in policymaking processes, coordinate efforts and provide feedback on Canada’s overall approach to international cooperation.

**Canada should strategically include colleges and universities in public engagement and international cooperation programming.**

The IAR includes a focus on better engagement with Canadians in international cooperation. Colleges and universities are well placed to partner with CSOs and Global Affairs Canada in this context. Global citizenship education is increasingly a part of college and university curricula across departments. Higher education institutions also offer opportunities for students to participate in campus groups focused on international cooperation issues, to study abroad, carry out internships and undertake applied research in partner countries. Through these activities students make meaningful connections all over the world.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://cso-effectiveness.org/-istanbul-principles.067-.html>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://ocic.on.ca/content/cultural-communities-sustainable-development-consultation>

There is an opportunity for Global Affairs Canada to enable and strengthen the work of CSOs, colleges and universities to promote collective impact by facilitating joined up efforts. Global Affairs Canada could work with colleges and universities in the area of public engagement and education on international cooperation, harnessing the increasing attention to global issues in tertiary education and the internationalization of student experiences. It could also facilitate linkages with other international cooperation stakeholders, including civil society, diaspora associations and others to support a shared vision for collective impact on sustainable development. In addition to support for coordinated efforts, Global Affairs Canada could also support specific initiatives, such as the Canada's International Youth Internship Program, which could be expanded and supported through predictable, long-term funding.

## Conclusion

Through this submission the OCIC community calls on Canada to adopt bigger dreams and better, more transformative collaboration for international cooperation. The SDGs provide a key framework against which to align Canada's international assistance efforts and due attention is needed to realizing all SDGs, respecting their integrated nature.

To realize the ambitions of the SDGs and a renewed approach to international cooperation Canada cannot simply do business *almost* as usual. The Government of Canada, Canadian CSOs and other partners will need to change. A national whole-of-system learning and innovation platform may be needed, accompanied by investments to build advanced skills in areas such as systemic thinking, design and innovation for development, iterative programming, developmental evaluation and integrated policy design, to promote collective impact. This will require proper planning and time to address capacity gaps within and outside Global Affairs Canada.

The recommendations also highlight the need to go beyond international assistance and focus on international cooperation with linkages across pillars within the IAR and to other policy domains set out. Canada should work with a diverse range of partners including small, medium and large CSOs, youth, women's rights groups, diaspora communities, educational institutions, community associations and the private sector, to effectively engage in international cooperation. Predictable, long-term, flexible and accessible funding is needed in this context. Finally, Canada's international cooperation should be characterized by a focus on the local through an approach that enables local communities to identify their own needs and to act on them.

OCIC thanks the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and Global Affairs Canada for this opportunity to engage on the future of Canada's international cooperation efforts. It also thanks Global Affairs Canada for its participation in OCIC's consultation. OCIC expects to see the results of the consultation reflected in the 2017 budget, matched by a rollout of policies, frameworks and appropriate funding mechanisms over 2017 and 2018. OCIC calls for the establishment of an inclusive multi-stakeholder High Level Working Group to work with Global Affairs Canada to elaborate detailed implementation plans going forward. Canada must take immediate steps to reform its international assistance and overall approach to international cooperation; the time bound nature of the SDGs and urgent need to address climate change requires no less.