

Canada's Contribution To The Millennium Development Goals

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Introduction

From the drafting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by John Peters Humphrey to the *Ottawa Treaty on Landmines*, the creation of the *International Criminal Court* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*, Canada has played a dynamic role in the United Nations system. The international human rights movement is proud to have worked in partnership with Canadians including our Government, Parliamentarians of all political affiliations and civil society organisations in these significant endeavours. Canada's activism within international fora has thus far conferred substantial benefits on Canadians - both in terms of raising human rights standards within Canada, as well as in promoting long-term peace, security, democracy and economic prosperity for the benefit of all nations. Our values are the product of our shared experience and political choices. They explain our comprehension of the world and the status of people within that world. Canada's commitment to universal human rights principles, the rule of law, women's rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, democracy and multiculturalism should at all times influence how we address the challenges of development. Our values should also influence the kind of rules and transparency in governance structures that Canada advocates, within the global economy and international trade and financial architecture. Our values should truly guide the actions of the Government of Canada as it seeks to put into practice a *whole of government* approach to the promotion of trade, development, finance, agriculture, immigration and cultural diversity.

The *International Policy Statement* launched on April 19, 2005 represents an opportunity for Canada to reenergize its leadership role in a world in transformation, by bringing together diplomacy, development, defence and trade and investment strategies to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. The Government of Canada has assured Canadians and the international community of its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. The publication *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* explicitly affirms that Canada intends to focus its contribution to the Millennium Development Goals on governance, private sector development, health, basic education and environmental sustainability, as well as to ensure that development assistance efforts systematically incorporate gender equality.¹ Furthermore, Canada, to avoid stretching its resources too thin and to increase the likelihood of creating positive long-term impact, intends to focus on “making a greater difference in fewer places.”² As announced in this policy statement, there will be a significant focus on Africa and an enhanced long-term bilateral program strategy with a core group of 25 partner countries selected among the world’s poorest countries, with at least two-thirds of the bilateral aid budget to be spent on Development Partner countries by 2010.³ Canada has not yet submitted a progress report to the United Nations on its work with regard to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We fully appreciate that the task of preparing analytical and evaluation reports based on systematic monitoring and review of past practices is not an easy one, however in the interest of effectiveness Canada will benefit from an increased capacity in these areas of monitoring, review and evaluation. The quality and frequency of its reporting to the UN and to the Canadian public will enhance its credibility and leadership.

As Prime Minister Paul Martin points out, “Our security, our prosperity and our quality of life all stand to be influenced by global transformations and the challenges they bring – from the spectre of international terrorism to the threats of virulent disease, climate change and disappearing fish stocks. It is through our foreign policy that Canada must and will act to ensure that we as a nation overcome the trials and embrace the opportunities of the 21st Century.” With regard to International Development Assistance he further adds, “[t]hose who donate want to know that their contribution is having an effect, that it is improving lives that it is getting to those who so desperately need it. The same is true of our government and its international assistance programs. We are motivated by the imperative to ensure our aid reaches the people who need it and is not wasted on unnecessary overhead.”⁴ This paper will highlight some of Canada’s contributions to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

¹Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World OVERVIEW*, Canada’s International Policy Statement, 2005, online: Foreign Affairs Canada <http://www.dfaic-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/IPS/IPS-Overview.pdf> [International Policy Statement].

²*Ibid.*

³List of Countries announced by CIDA on April 17, 2005: **Africa:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia; **Americas:** Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua; **Asia:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam; **Europe:** Ukraine

⁴*Foreword* from the Prime Minister, International Policy Statement, *supra* notes 1.

I 2000-2005: A Period of Engagement and Adjustments

A review of Canada's development practice over the past few years highlights the efforts made in pursuit of strategic development initiatives that focus on increasing the quality and quantity of aid and strengthening innovative partnerships for development in developing countries. Volume-wise, Canada is the 11th largest development assistance donor.⁵ Among the major policy and funding decisions announced by the Government of Canada in 2002, Canada seeks to increase the International Assistance Envelope by 8% per year in order to reach ODA/GNI ratio of 0.35% by 2010.⁶ One hundred and fifty-five countries received development assistance from Canada, and of these, 18 countries received assistance valued at more than \$10 million annually and 54 nations received less than \$1 million.⁷ 45% of the aid was focussed on particular developing country partners and regions: the lowest ratio in the Development Assistance Committee.⁸

Social Development Priorities: A Framework for Action (2000) of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) included a five-year plan to double the funding for four priority areas to CAD\$ 724 million. These include basic education, health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and child protection, with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme.⁹ With regard to **basic education**, Canada's key initiatives include: improvement in community access to schools, an increase in the quality of teaching, support to life skills training, learner-centred approaches, teacher training, curriculum development, creation of child-friendly, girl-friendly schools and using new technology and distance education to train educators and expand access to education information and resources.¹⁰ In 2000, CIDA's largest commitments went to Mozambique, Jamaica and Haiti for a total of \$16 USD million over 2 or 5 years.¹¹

With regard to **health and nutrition**, Canada's priorities are fighting communicable diseases, strengthening sexual and reproductive health, especially for women, improving infant and child health and ensuring food security. Canada is determined to encourage implementation of its new generic drug legislation in other countries and it has been actively involved in debates on trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) in the context of improving access to drugs in developing countries.¹² Its larger commitments in 2000 were to support pharmaceuticals for key diseases in Zambia, improve family and reproductive health care and implement small-scale community water, sanitation and health structures in Malawi.

Canadian projects related to **HIV/AIDS** are mainly regional rather than country-specific. CIDA's expenditures in this area have increased and are projected to reach CAD 80 million by 2005-2008.¹³ The concern to deal effectively with HIV/AIDS will be integrated in all bilateral programming of Africa and Middle East including the involvement of people living with

⁵OECD, Development Assistance Committee, *Canada*, Development Cooperation Review Series (Paris: OECD, 003), online: OECD <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/38/2409572.pdf> [OECD].

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷International Policy Statement, *supra* note 1.

⁸OECD, *supra* note 5.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰International Policy Statement, *supra* note 1.

¹¹OECD, *supra* note 5.

¹²International Policy Statement, *supra* note 1; OECD, *supra* note 5.

¹³*Ibid.*

HIV/AIDS in programme design and delivery. In 2000 CIDA spent \$37 million USD on HIV/AIDS-related projects in Africa, India and South and Central Asia.¹⁴

With regard to **child protection**, it is difficult to estimate Canada's real involvement because many projects tend to be placed in other categories and are not reported as child protection projects. Canada's *Child Protection Action Plan* focuses on marginalised groups of children: street children, ethnic-minority children, sexually exploited and trafficked children and children affected by armed conflict.¹⁵ Child labour is also one of the main concerns in the area and CIDA works on eliminating the worst forms of child labour and supports working children with programmes including formal and non-formal education and health care. In 2000, CIDA jointly hosted, with Foreign Affairs Canada (formerly DFAIT), the International Conference on War-Affected Children. This meeting was the first of its kind.

Lastly, with regard to **gender equality**, in 2000-01, Canada allocated 5% of its ODA disbursements on gender-specific activities. According to the Development Assistance Committee's Creditor Reporting System, in 2000 CIDA reported that gender equality was the main objective in 5% of its projects, in 53% it was a significant objective, in 3% gender equality issues were not targeted, and 39% on the projects were not screened for this objective.¹⁶ Since 1994, Canada has established a Gender Training programme for UN Peacekeeping Missions, sponsored the resolution on Violence against Women at the UN Commission on Human rights, was instrumental in the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and established a joint Parliamentary-NGO Committee on Women, Peace and Security.

II Canada's Specific Actions

1. Focus on Africa

Canada plans to spend half of the increase in ODA on Africa, and has added a CAD 500 million allocation to this sum.¹⁷ Its recent actions in Africa include mobilizing the international community to stop the ethnic cleansing and massive abuse of human rights in the Darfur region of Sudan, providing financial support for the International Criminal Court to prosecute war crimes committed in Darfur and providing training and other assistance to the peace operations of the African Union. Canada launched the Canada Investment Fund for Africa (CAD 100 millions) providing risk capital to support growth-generating private sector development.¹⁸ Canadian authorities estimate that about CAD 6 billion in existing and new Canadian aid flows will go to Africa between 2003 and 2008.¹⁹ Canada has reaffirmed its commitment to the G8 Africa Action Plan which includes economic growth, quota- and duty-free access for LDC imports, private sector investment fund for infrastructure, trade capacity-building, bridging the

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*; International Policy Statement, *supra* note 1.

¹⁹OECD, *supra* note 5.

digital divide, strengthening institutions and governance, public sector capacity-building, strengthening parliamentary system, NEPAD support, West Africa regional security, investing in the people and future, basic education, HIV/AIDS research, polio eradication, agricultural productivity and water and energy infrastructure and management.

2. Support to Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Canada offers LDCs free access to the Canadian market with exception of a few areas of agricultural trade.²⁰ Canada has granted unilateral debt relief to Ethiopia, Ghana and Senegal. Canada has advocated for a more ambitious debt servicing relief scheme within the G-8, beginning with a core group of countries and possibly expanding to others. Canada promises to press for greater participation in debt relief by international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) without jeopardizing the viability of these institutions or of the world markets.²¹ While ODA is an important facet of Canada's contribution to international development, it is important that Canada conceives of "development" not solely in terms of "aid." To further development, it must pursue a comprehensive strategy that is based on an equitable system of international relations. If development aid is complimented by reforms that make trade, commerce and investment more equitable, there can be synergies from two sources of development leading towards a country's integration into the global economy.

On February 2, 2005, Canada announced it would contribute approximately CAD 172 million over the next five years to the International Development Association of the World Bank and the African Development Fund. Assistance will be available to the 15 countries that have completed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, a multilateral debt reduction strategy, as well as 4 other countries participating in the World Bank Poverty Reduction Support Credit Program. A further 37 countries are potentially eligible for benefits. Governance and human rights considerations are built into this proposal, as is a link to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015.²²

3. Infrastructure

In 2000-2001, infrastructure services represented CAD 154 million or 10% of Canada's ODA activities. CIDA has decreased its aid in this area, both because of the shrinking budget and the high costs of infrastructure projects. Furthermore, CIDA has indicated a preference to shift to areas that Canadians can better associate with poverty-reduction. In 2000, CIDA's largest commitments involved electricity and transportation sectors. Thus, Canada provided support for electrical transmission and distribution in Slovenia, helped with establishing a less polluting intermodal transportation service in China and contributed to a small-scale road transportation development project in Vietnam.²³

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹International Policy Statement, *supra* note 1.

²²"Canada Proposes 100 Per Cent Debt Relief for World's Poorest Countries", Ottawa, February 2, 2005, online: Department of Finance Canada <http://www.fin.gc.ca/news05/05-008e.html>.

²³OECD, *supra* note 5

4. Environment

Environment represents for Canada a cross-cutting issue as well as an area with specific funding. In 2000-01, CIDA spent only CAD\$152 million (9% of ODA budget) on specific environmental projects. According to the DAC's report for participants at the Johannesburg Summit, Canada's ODA volume related to climate change, desertification, and bio-diversity, as well as its multilateral ODA commitments related to the Rio Convention, were all below the DAC average for 1998-2000. Canada, however, announced that the promotion of sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources is a key priority for Canadian development co-operation and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Canada also announced its intention to ratify the Kyoto protocol. Canada now needs to ensure it follows through on its commitments, keeping in mind that developing countries are more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change.²⁴

5. Private sector

Allocation for private sector development is an important priority for Canada. In 2000-01, total disbursements in this area represented CAD 177 million (11% of ODA) placing it third among the six programming priorities. CIDA plans to increase this budget and give more emphasis to this area. In 2000, CIDA's largest projects in private sector development took place in China, Nigeria and Philippines and totalled USD 11 million. At the same period, CIDA was committed in projects in the field of microfinance in Haiti, Senegal and Egypt (saving and credit co-operatives, networks of mutual saving and credit schemes and policy development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises).

6. Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Human rights are based on universal values enshrined in the United Nations *International Bill of Human Rights* that Canadians cherish, along with many citizens and states world-wide. The Government of Canada considers human rights, democracy, and good governance to be at the core of its sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts. Major projects in the area on human rights, democracy and governance in 2000 were supported by CIDA in Asia (India, Indonesia, China, Burma, Bangladesh, West Indies, Cambodia), South America (Guatemala, Brazil), Eastern Europe (Former Yugoslavia; Kosovo, Former Serbia and Montenegro) and Africa.²⁵ The human rights and democracy initiatives included the promotion of human rights education, support to elections and local capacity-building. Canada also assisted in strengthening civil society in Asia through its supports for village-level governance projects in China, capacity-building of Burmese border-based refugees and encouraging community-based economic development in India. The good governance projects included support to technology transfer in public sector reform for social development and environment (Brazil; USD 10 million), legal

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

reform (Bangladesh; USD 10 million) and public sector financial management (West Indies; USD 7 million). Peacebuilding and landmine clearance projects have been supported in Cambodia and in Africa. As violations of human rights continue around the world, Canada needs to help stop the atrocities wherever and whenever they occur; to ensure that measures are taken to prevent their recurrence; and to bridge the gap between the formal adherence of States to international human rights covenants and their actual practice at the domestic and international levels.

III Recommendations

Although the Millennium Development Goals do not explicitly refer to human rights, the results they seek to achieve are the promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights obligations by States. Canada should creatively use all the levers at its disposal, namely development cooperation, trade, investments, defence and diplomacy to promote the Millennium Development Goals. Canada's credibility, effectiveness and global leadership can be enhanced as it adopts in actual practice a *whole of government approach* to implement its commitments and international obligations. Recognising that Canadian identity is greatly enriched by the cultures of Indigenous Peoples', Canada should advocate in favour of the international recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples'. Likewise, Canada should ratify important human rights instruments including the American Convention on Human Rights, the Optional Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (San Salvador protocol) and others. Canada should also improve its policy coherence by monitoring the conduct of Canadian corporations to ensure they respect the same universal human rights norms and standards in developing countries as they would do at home. Furthermore, Canada should establish a coherent link between economic growth strategies and eradication of poverty strategies and call for a refinement of the policies of the International Financial Institutions and the World Trade Organisation to respect human rights norms and standards enshrined in the *International Bill of Human Rights*.

Many of those who are involved in actions at the national level in developing and industrialised countries to reduce or eradicate poverty, recognise that economic, social and cultural rights are not just *aspirations* or *objectives* to be achieved in the distant future. Food, water, education, work and housing are vital and immediate human rights. While one hundred and forty-five States have ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, these rights are becoming increasingly illusory. As a promoter of the Millennium Development Goals, Canada should explicitly champion economic, social and cultural rights at home and abroad. A positive step in the future would be its participation in drafting and adopting an *Optional Protocol* to this *Covenant*. Cooperation and global partnerships for development between industrialised countries and developing countries, with a particular focus on Africa and South Asia have yet to yield results. This needs to be corrected by determined and concerted political action. Doubling our current efforts and working in partnership with prioritised developing countries would permit to draw up comprehensive national development plans of action for the eradication of poverty; capacity building and long-term investments. These concrete actions would finally make a much needed difference to the lives of the poor.

Conclusion

It is well recognised internationally that Canadian civil society organisations are at the heart of Canada's actions abroad. Therefore, it is important that Canada's foreign policy and development practice in implementing the Millennium Development Goals should increasingly recognize, foster and support the contributions of civil society, both domestically and internationally, especially with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights and the building of democratic institutions, based on principles of participation, equality and accountability. Policy dialogue and enhanced cooperation between Canadian civil society organisations and the Government of Canada is essential to the building of a global vision and an inclusive policy perspective in the current global context where ethnic, racial and religious strife and fundamentalisms are on the rise. Canada's *International Policy Statement 2005* rightly recognises that "the Canadian population is both keenly interested in international affairs and strongly oriented toward taking an active role on the world stage. Our younger generations—the most ethnically diverse in Canadian history—are already capitalizing on the opportunities presented by globalization. Their vision for Canada in the 21st century is a function of their own experience as confident and connected members of the global commons." The task at hand to implement the Millennium Development Goals is urgent and compelling. The Canadian public needs to know what is being done in their name in developing countries. It is only by undertaking a systematic and periodic review of our development practice that we can learn lessons from the past and move onward with confidence and dynamism.

Montréal, May 30, 2005