



Canada cares:

Our vision for international
development cooperation

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Introduction



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Dear Canadians,

Despite great global progress this century, more than half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day—and more than a billion struggle through life on less than a dollar a day. Canadians want to help—to provide education, clean water, sustainable power and life-saving drugs. But our government still isn't keeping its promises to the world's poorest.

Unfortunately, Canada's spending on official development assistance has declined to 0.24% of our gross national income. This number falls far below the 0.7% target set at the United Nations, at the urging of Canada, more than forty years ago. Continued cuts by Conservative governments, following those made by successive Liberal governments, have left Canada unable—and seemingly unwilling—to meet our international obligations. These cuts have set back our work to end global poverty and undermine Canada's position as a leader in international development.

Canadians can trust Tom Mulcair's NDP to fix the damage done to Canada's international reputation. New Democrats understand that international development cooperation is about justice, solidarity, empowerment, and partnership—not just a matter of charity. Everyone benefits from a prosperous, sustainable and stable world where there is hope for all. Canadians know that when the world prospers, Canada prospers.

Canada has a strong role to play in international efforts to end global poverty, inequality, and injustice. We all live together in a vibrant, interconnected and changing global community. Our vision is comprehensive; we believe that in this globalized world, it is more important than ever to bring together stakeholders—NGOs, the private sector, professional associations, faith-based organizations, foundations, unions, chambers of commerce, universities, service clubs, diaspora, cultural communities, and volunteers—that are actively engaged in international development. We need to engage the skills and experience that Canadians from all walks of life have to offer.

This document reflects what we have heard so far in our consultations with Canadians. But it is just the beginning of a conversation that we, the NDP, hope to have with you about shaping our agenda for the next government—one that intends to make Canada a strong and engaged global citizen.

Ending global poverty is not only the right thing to do—it is also the wise thing to do. I am excited to take your ideas to Ottawa, and to share with you our vision for Canadian international development cooperation.

Fulfilling our commitments

Every five seconds, a child dies from the effects of extreme poverty—and skyrocketing global food prices are just deepening the crisis. Instead of boosting aid levels, the Conservatives are cutting them. New Democrats understand that aid alone will not end global poverty, but it is an essential resource and an important part of our international obligations.

Reversing the cuts

For too long, Liberal and Conservative governments have promised to increase Canada's international development funding without following through. In fact, under Jean Chretien's Liberal government, Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) dropped from 0.49% of our Gross National Income (GNI) in 1991/92 to .25% in 2000/01. Under the Conservatives, Canada's ODA/GNI ratio will fall below 0.24% by 2015—meaning Canada will rank among the world's worst performing aid donors. New Democrats have consistently promised to reach the internationally-agreed upon goal of 0.7% of GNI. We will get Canada on track to fulfilling our longstanding commitment by developing a multi-year timetable to increase our ODA budget to 0.7% of GNI. Several other countries, including the United Kingdom, have reached the 0.7% target. All it takes is political will.

Ensuring effective aid

Through our extensive consultations with Canadians, we have heard repeated concerns that, under the Conservatives, Canada has turned away from sub-Saharan Africa and has put too much focus on middle-income countries with trade potential. New Democrats believe that Canada's ODA should go where it is both most effective and most needed. Canada must engage in Africa and increase our focus on the poorest countries and the least-developed, including fragile and conflict-affected states. We need to develop strong partnerships with developing countries and help facilitate their ownership of development cooperation.

Respecting the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*

The *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* (ODAAA) requires Canada's international assistance to contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspectives of the poor, and be consistent with international human rights standards. As a recent report by the Auditor General¹ noted, implementation of the Act has been disappointing.

New Democrats believe the federal government should respect the spirit of the Act and ensure that all strategies and programming transparently comply with the Act.

2. (1) The purpose of this Act is to ensure that all Canadian official development assistance abroad is provided with a central focus on poverty reduction and in a manner that is consistent with Canadian values, Canadian foreign policy, the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2, 2005, sustainable development and democracy promotion and that promotes international human rights standards.

- *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (2008)*

A progressive long-term vision

The federal government should develop a sustainable, progressive long-term strategy for international development cooperation—ensuring accountability, innovation, and predictability in Canada’s efforts and investments. Our development cooperation policy must put poverty reduction and human rights at the heart of our programming. It should also engage with, and inform, Canada’s foreign policy. With the creation of the new Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), we see the need for a holistic, all-of-government approach to international cooperation that takes into account the impacts of all of Canada’s policies and actions—including immigration, security, trade, and meeting our climate change objectives—on global development. At the same time, Development must be on equal footing to Foreign Affairs and Trade.

As New Democrats, our vision for international development includes addressing the sources of poverty, injustice and insecurity in developing countries by drawing on a more complex understanding of the causes of inequality, and allowing for contextual circumstances to inform different strategies in specific countries. Such an approach requires attention to issues of good governance, human rights and policy advocacy, to ensure that governments are more accountable to the needs of their populations. Our long-term vision is rooted in the recognition that development only happens over the long-term, with partnerships that last through time, and sustained efforts to achieve real results.

Promoting good governance

Not so long ago, governance programming was the largest pillar of Canada’s aid program. Unfortunately the Conservatives have abandoned governance programming as a stand-alone area of cooperation, though good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable economic development. Good governance is also essential to preventing and reducing conflict.

Canada must work with developing countries to strengthen governance frameworks and ensure that our development assistance contributes to sustainable development in accordance with the *ODA Accountability Act*.

We believe the government should increase support to Canadian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and their partners in the Global South for policy and advocacy work. A strong civil society is necessary to hold governments to account for the use of public funds and to inform policy choices and program implementation. New Democrats believe that in countries in which Canadian trade interests are strong, including countries in which Canadian extractive companies operate, we have the responsibility to provide support not only for good governance, but also for CSO advocacy on issues of human rights, labour rights, gender equality, and environmental standards. We believe this benefits local populations and Canadians.

¹ Spring 2013 Report of the Auditor General of Canada.
Available at <http://bit.ly/1Ha6Dop>

Integrating human rights and development

The *ODA Accountability Act* requires Canada to ensure our development assistance is consistent with international human rights standards. Beyond this, New Democrats believe development must be rooted in a human rights-based approach.

Some of the most effective work supported by Canadian development cooperation has involved work to empower disenfranchised communities to mobilize themselves in defense of their rights, which is essential for good governance and sustainable poverty reduction. This has included Canada's past emphasis on the promotion of women's and children's rights.

To be effective and credible, such activities need careful coordination with other donors and local CSOs, as well as sensitive policy dialogue with national governments. A better approach is to work with other stakeholders in human rights, supporting specifically women's rights, children rights, LGBTTT rights, indigenous rights, and the rights of persons living with disabilities as key components of our rights-based approach.

Advancing women's equality

New Democrats recognize that gender inequality is a leading cause of poverty. Canada must ensure women's rights, including reproductive and sexual rights, are at the core of all development programming, and ensure all international cooperation initiatives reflect our international obligations to fulfill women's rights and gender equality.

Canada should increase support for women's organizations—including women's rights organizations—in developing countries. Canada should also provide support for UN Women, the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The advancement of women's rights and gender justice should be a priority, as should be funding for programs that aim to tackle violence against women and girls. This issue remains a global pandemic and a major obstacle to development, and is neglected by too many donor countries. We encourage programming that focuses on the economic, social, and political empowerment of women in the Global South.

Investing in health and education

Health and education are essential to sustainable development and a cornerstone of Canadian development aid. Canada must continue to invest in health and education programming, particularly for children, given that basic health and education interventions are proven to reduce poverty and save lives. Canada should also focus on the strengthening of public health and education systems. Public healthcare and education are strong weapons in the fight against inequality and help mitigate the worst impacts of skewed income and wealth distribution.

Over the past several years New Democrats have taken strong positions on the following:

- Following from the recent Ebola crisis in West Africa, we have called on Canada to work towards strengthening public health care systems in the developing world.

- New Democrats have committed to re-introduce legislation to reform Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR), which would remove bureaucratic red tape and enable Canadian pharmaceutical companies to export generic versions of life-saving medicine for people suffering from HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases in the developing world.
- New Democrats have called on Canada to commit to the replenishment of multilateral health initiatives such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria; TB REACH; and the GAVI Alliance.
- We believe Canada's commitments to Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) should build on efforts in this area by including substantial funding for programming on family planning and reproductive and sexual health. Canada's approach to MNCH would also be strengthened by rooting the program framework within a human rights approach, addressing gender inequality, and integrating interventions to end violence against women and girls.
- We support efforts to improve education in the developing world, including through funding for the Global Partnership for Education, and we believe Canada's aid programs must support gender equality in education.

Providing opportunities for youth

Youth under the age of 24 make up 1.8 billion of the world's population. Nine of ten youth live in developing countries. We believe it is critical to support youth empowerment and youth-led development initiatives that tap into the full creative potential of the largest cohort of youth in history. In addition to increased investments in these areas, Canada should invest in innovative programming that creates opportunities in developing economies for young people and provides them with a more hopeful future. We also support programming that increases the political participation of youth in decision-making.

At home, the federal government should develop programs that encourage young Canadians to make connections between the local and the global. We believe Canadian youth benefit greatly from experiences in international development. We would like to see greater investment in youth programming that builds global citizenship skills, through people-to-people exchanges and connections. These programs build skills, increase education and employability, and lay foundations for long-term peace and understanding.

Furthering food security

New Democrats believe Food Security should remain a Canadian international development priority. The right to food is a basic human right and essential to poverty reduction in developing countries. The federal government should focus on programming that helps address urgent concerns in the global food system—including increasing the accessibility of nutritious, affordable and locally relevant food; addressing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (most of whom are women); and supporting adaptation of communities and regions to climate change

To do this, Canada must increase its investments in agriculture, especially small-scale agriculture, as a driver of economic growth. Canada should also continue to support life-saving programming on nutrition and support Canadian innovation in this area. Nutrition is an essential component of food security.

Striving for tax fairness

Far more than aid dollars, the international economic architecture of finance, trade and investment rules sets the parameters for what is achievable for poverty reduction and economic sustainability for vulnerable communities in developing countries. Current work by the OECD and G20 aims to deal with this complex challenge. Up to \$18.5 trillion is reportedly hidden in tax havens worldwide, representing more than \$156 billion in lost tax revenue—twice what’s needed to end extreme poverty.² Much of this money, if collected by governments, could be reinvested into public services like health and education in developing countries, which would not only help lift people out of poverty but also reduce their dependence on aid. New Democrats believe in tax fairness, and would work to end tax havens and tax avoidance.

Implementing corporate social responsibility

New Democrats believe Canada should promote the values of social justice, environmental protection, and human rights abroad.

We agree that business plays a key role in creating the economic growth and wealth that is crucial for international cooperation and development to flourish. Canada is a leader in international investments. Of course, if these investments are to grow and benefit developing countries, Canada needs to be a leader in corporate social responsibility. This is good for business and good for development.

New Democrats support initiatives that strengthen transparency, accountability, and responsibility of Canadian companies operating overseas. We believe the Canadian government, in cooperation with key stakeholders, should adopt a strong legal corporate accountability framework for Canadian companies abroad, including clear standards with robust sanctions for non-compliance; a strong independent oversight body; and access to judicial remedy. Canada should encourage and support key stakeholders, provinces and territories to develop a mandatory mechanism for disclosure by companies of the payments they make to foreign governments.

Canada should implement the recommendations of the 2007 National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility to ensure that Canadian companies abide by international human rights law and environmental standards when operating overseas, and develop and enforce sanctions if they do not.

² Source: Oxfam <http://www.oxfam.org/en/node/4751>

New Democrats have introduced legislation requiring Canada to institute a Corporate Social Responsibility Ombudsman responsible for investigating complaints filed against Canadian extractive companies working abroad.

We have also introduced legislation to help end the conflict minerals trade by requiring Canadian companies using minerals from central Africa to publicly identify supply chains, thereby allowing Canadians to make more informed choices as consumers.

Committing to humanitarian assistance

New Democrats are committed to providing humanitarian assistance in accordance with the humanitarian imperative, and upholding the four principles of humanitarian aid: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.

Canada should have an overall Humanitarian Assistance strategy. This strategy should address the different capabilities of different stakeholders, and take a comprehensive and holistic approach to prevention of and response to humanitarian crises.

Canada's humanitarian response should be proportional to need. Timeliness of aid is crucial; Canada should disburse its pledged humanitarian funds as efficiently and immediately as possible without weighing any other considerations other than need, while giving its partner organizations as much flexibility as possible to respond to rapidly changing circumstances on the ground. This should also include appropriate responses with a longer-term view to protracted crises, chronic emergencies and long-term violent conflicts. Canada should improve transparency with regard to decision-making on humanitarian funding, including clarity on when and if matching fund mechanisms will be employed.

Of course, humanitarian assistance cannot be a substitute for engaged diplomatic and political action by Canada to address the causes of these crises. Making poverty reduction the objective of Canada's development cooperation program will help reduce vulnerability to humanitarian crises. We believe the Canadian government must build resilience *and* reduce risks of further crises, whether political or natural. Recent humanitarian disasters such as the Ebola crisis and Syrian crisis also indicate the need for strengthening health and governance systems. We also see a need for initiatives that aim to protect and advance women's rights in the context of humanitarian emergencies.

Finally, given the increase in natural disasters as a result of changing climate, we must also work to prevent and mitigate natural disasters through a renewed focus on resilience, disaster risk reduction, including adaptation to climate change. New Democrats believe that Canada must re-engage on the international stage to combat climate change.

Joining forces for a better world

International development cooperation is not just about Official Development Assistance (ODA). International development policies are increasingly focusing on leveraging opportunities, creating positive relationships, and enabling cooperation. New Democrats believe Canada should improve transparency in decision-making, accountability, effectiveness, and predictability of aid. Accountability should be about more than accountancy; it should be a two-way process between donor and recipient, with a focus on outcomes and, for donors, an obligation to be predictable in funding. The federal government must improve its relationship with partners across the country and the world. New Democrats also believe the federal government should play a role as facilitator for all Canadians engaged in international cooperation. We believe in promoting and enabling a multi-stakeholder approach that brings all actors together to find common solutions to global challenges.

Engaging Canadians from all walks of life

Canadians from all walks of life want to be more engaged in international cooperation. In fact, a 2015 Nielson Opinion Quest public opinion poll found that 94% of Canadians believe it is important to improve health, education and economic opportunity for the world's poorest. Further, 76% of Canadians agree we have a moral obligation to help.³ However, years of budget cuts and changing government priorities have hindered our progress. NGOs, professional associations, faith-based organizations, unions, chambers of commerce, universities, research institutes and think tanks, diaspora communities and service clubs are among the many stakeholders actively engaged in international development cooperation. New Democrats encourage partnerships with Canadians from all walks of life. The federal government has a role to play in facilitating partnerships among and between these groups. We need to tap into the skills and experience of what different Canadians have to offer.

New Democrats also believe public engagement is a key element in successful international development policy. Canada should have a public engagement policy. We think DFATD should support the active involvement of Canadians in development cooperation by reinstating or creating new funding mechanisms that support the work of Canadian CSOs in public engagement.

Research, education and good evidence are key to improving our international development efforts. We believe government support for research, including in universities, research institutes and think tanks, is extremely important. We also see a role for the federal government in working with the provinces to build development education into school curricula across the country. Canadians have repeatedly shown a strong interest in international development cooperation, and the government should encourage and build on this interest.

³ Engineers without Borders and Intercouncil Network, *Canadian Perspectives on International Development Report of Results* (April 2015), Available at <http://bit.ly/1P5Xa8y>

Building relationships with Canadian civil society

Canada's civil society sector is experienced and effective at achieving positive development outcomes and at building long-term valuable partnerships overseas. Yet actions by the Conservatives over the past several years have had a negative impact on Canadian civil society organizations. In addition to making harmful cuts to international development funding, the Conservatives have made specific changes to policies and organizational guidelines at DFATD that have had cumulative negative impacts on the Canadian CSO sector. Faced with unpredictable funding schedules, frequently changing priorities, and far fewer calls for proposals, many organizations have been forced to reduce their staff and international activities. Canada's "brand" has diminished and many CSOs in Canada are at risk of closing entirely. CSOs have been treated as instruments or implementers, rather than as partners with the government in development cooperation. This is unacceptable and a misuse of their skills and experience.

Another consequence of these changes is that many long-term partnerships with CSOs in the Global South have ended. We believe the federal government has a role in helping to build the capacities of CSOs in the Global South.

New Democrats believe the federal government should consider the different organizational needs and capacities of CSOs and other development actors when designing funding mechanisms. CSOs play diverse roles, including small- and medium-sized organizations that have established and specialized geographic and thematic niches that allow them to be highly effective. We understand the challenges facing smaller organizations. We must take a critical look at how overly detailed requirements and funding applications affect CSOs, especially smaller and medium-sized CSOs with fewer staff and resources.

We see Canadian CSOs as partners in international cooperation, not just implementers. CSO input should be actively sought in designing government policy. The federal government should offer alternatives to the current Calls for Proposals process that would make better use of the different experience, knowledge of the field, and capacity for innovation of Canadian CSOs, both large and small.

The dearth of core funding from government, the private sector and charitable foundations has hampered the ability of Canadian CSOs to diversify their funding sources. Canada's civil society sector needs predictability and flexibility in order to achieve development outcomes in rapidly changing circumstances. Canada's CSOs should be able to rely on the federal government to give them clear and timely information about what government resources may be available to them.

Connecting with international partners

We believe Canadians deserve a government that will take a leadership role in the international community, including through active engagement in multilateral organizations in both policy and financial terms. Through dialogue and engagement with allies and partners, Canada can achieve far more than on our own. Drawing on Canada's rich traditions and international expertise, we should increase our participation in multilateral organizations by working with them as true partners, rather than deriding their ambition or treating them merely as executing agencies for disbursing our ODA.

We are at an important crossroads in international development cooperation as we move from the Millennium Development Goals to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework. The post-2015 development agenda will bring forward new and universal development priorities for all countries.

Canada should be a leader in current efforts to develop a global partnership and to implement the decisions taken at the UN regarding the new Sustainable Development goals. Unfortunately, despite the hard work by Canadian civil servants, the Conservative government has not shown positive leadership in the global debate on the post-2015 agenda, or in a number of other important global development initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Canada must be a fully engaged and supportive partner in global discussions on the future of aid. We can no longer sit on the sidelines.

Fixing Canada's approach to the private sector

New Democrats believe the private sector has an important role to play in international development. We recognize that economic growth is essential for sustainable poverty reduction; however, not all economic growth is necessarily sustainable, nor does it always lead to reducing poverty and inequality. Private sector finance, while important, should be a complement to Canada's official development assistance, and not a means to compensate a decline in ODA.

Being pro-business should not mean using development aid to support Canadian companies abroad, which is the role of the International Trade department. We believe the Canadian government should ensure that Canada's promotion of its economic interests remain distinct from its international development programs and goals. Canada's development focus should start from the perspectives of the poor, as required by law. We believe the federal government should establish the following: clear criteria for the types of companies with which DFATD will engage in its private sector partnerships; a clear procedure for submitted proposals; detailed, publicly-available benchmarks and indicators flowing from the ODA Accountability Act to measure development outcomes of proposals; and a transparent monitoring process, to ensure partnerships comply with these standards.

Any future partnerships within DFATD and the private sector should follow international best practices, including the OECD Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private partnerships.

Beyond the role of Canada's private sector, the most important private sector partners in development cooperation are actually those in the Global South. Canada's approach to the private sector must recognize the important role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Global South that are active in creating goods, services and employment in sectors key for poverty reduction in developing countries.

The New Democrat approach

Uphold core values

Poverty should be at the heart of international development policy. New Democrats also believe that social justice, sustainability, cooperation, human rights and solidarity should drive international development.

Engage with partners

New Democrats believe that government should facilitate and foster relationships between Canadians from all walks of life, and that Canada should build strong relationships with international partners.

Put people first

New Democrats believe that government should be shaped to meet the real needs of people, both in Canada and in the Global South.

Think long-term

International development requires long-term thinking. New Democrats take the long view in policy development.

Listen to the evidence

All policies must be based on the best available evidence, ensuring that we make the most of proven initiatives and target programs wisely.

