

CCIC takes action to prevent and combat sexual misconduct in the international humanitarian and development sector

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), Canada's national voice for the international development and humanitarian sector, is deeply concerned by the recent reports of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by some employees of civil society organizations in Haiti and elsewhere. The reported misconduct is inexcusable. It contravenes the spirit of the humanitarian principles and a human rights-based approach to development that CCIC and its members promote.

In response, CCIC is taking a variety of actions to prevent and combat sexual misconduct.

Last week, CCIC convened more than a dozen of Canada's leading humanitarian and development organizations to discuss how the sector will address this serious issue. This discussion followed a meeting with the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and the Deputy Minister, at which Canadian civil society organizations shared the different tools, mechanisms and safeguards they have in place to prevent such incidences and respond to them. The organizations reaffirmed their collective commitment to safeguards and accountability to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

As a first step, CCIC will convene a Steering Committee to guide the prevention and management of sexual exploitation, abuse and misconduct, with representatives from across the sector. This committee will share best practices and identify immediate and ongoing next steps to ensure responsible and accountable practices by Canadian organizations providing development and humanitarian assistance overseas. .

CCIC will also undertake a review of its Code of Ethics and Operational Standards – one of the first of its kind in the world – to ensure that sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment are explicitly and appropriately addressed. Furthermore, CCIC will coordinate the sharing of training modules and tools to ensure that all organizations in the sector have access to safeguarding knowledge and mechanisms.

From Julia Sánchez, President-CEO CCIC:

“Canadian civil society organizations are committed to ensuring that vulnerable populations receiving Canadian assistance are treated with dignity and respect. CCIC will work with its members to ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support those who experience or witness misconduct to come forward, and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and prevented from causing any further harm.”

For more information, please contact:

Jessica Ruano, Communications Officer
613 241 7007 ext. 343 | jruano@ccic.ca