



**Submission by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation
OECD Development Assistance Committee Peer Review of Canada – December 2017**

Executive Summary

In December, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) made a written submission on some key issues in Canada's international development and humanitarian assistance to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as part of the DAC's 2018 Peer Review of Canada. This is a summary of that submission.

Much has changed in Canada's development and humanitarian policy and programming since the last Peer Review in 2012. Yet many trends that were noted in the last Peer Review remain true today.

Part I: A bold vision for transformative change – but challenges remain

Canada's vision for its international assistance has been clarified and strengthened by the release in June 2017 of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). With increased funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights and women's rights organizations, and increased commitment to increasing funding to gender equality, this vision offers strong potential for pioneering global leadership by Canada in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through a focus on SDG 5.

Staff and systems at Global Affairs Canada (GAC) must be fit for purpose. GAC will need to recalibrate away from risk-averse short-term results, specialized and siloed projectization, and onerous reporting and accountability requirements, in favour of greater risk-taking, integrated program-based approaches, measuring longer-term outcomes and impacts, and investing in research, evaluation and learning.

With respect to the general coordination of policy at GAC, the establishment of the new International Assistance Operations Bureau, tasked with coordinating the rollout of the FIAP and ensuring its coherent implementation across the Department, is a positive development. The government must still develop a suite of policies, strategies, and staff and partner training, to ensure the successful implementation and integration of a feminist approach within GAC. Perhaps topmost among them is a humanitarian policy, which should assertively address the numerous and intersecting challenges facing the global humanitarian system.

As the FIAP is implemented, GAC should ensure that the shifts entailed are undertaken responsibly and sustainably. While the transition from a countries-of-focus model to a more complex model based on type-of-country, type-of-people, and sectoral themes is welcome overall, GAC should be more open and transparent about implications for the continuation of investment in areas of traditional focus. Meanwhile, the transition to a feminist approach must also account for and respond to local and dynamic contextual realities, as well as intersectional factors including age, ethnicity, religion, and economic status, among others. In the case of humanitarian assistance, it must be consistent with the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) welcome renewed dialogue with GAC, including around how the FIAP will be implemented. This is a welcome change from the periodic and *ad hoc* consultations of the previous government. Yet there is a general feeling that CSOs are often still viewed primarily as service delivery agents rather than as substantive partners. GAC should develop a public policy on consultation and dialogue to create greater clarity around the parameters and expectations of engaging in dialogue and consultation with partners, and fully and

inclusively implement the Civil Society Partnerships Policy – in particular, ensuring that policies across government support an enabling environment for CSOs.

Since the merger of the Canadian International Development Agency with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 2013, there seems to be evidence of greater internal collaboration. However, the extent to which synergies have been realized, and to which diplomatic and trade officials understand development implications of their work, is not obvious. The FIAP and SDGs are frameworks by which the government could further align its efforts at both international and domestic levels.

Part II: Transforming International Assistance

To meet the transformative ambition of the FIAP (and the SDGs), GAC must become a transformative department. This should include shifting the balance of power back towards programming and policy away from the financing and contract divisions, reducing reporting and accounting obligations in favour of supporting responsive and continuous programming, evaluation and learning. Action is also needed to make funding mechanisms more predictable, equitable, flexible, and transparent. Working with civil society, GAC should develop and test a diverse suite of funding mechanisms, including highly responsive and decentralized funding mechanisms for both development and humanitarian programming.

Part III: Principles and Partnership

Canada appears to have abandoned the aid and development effectiveness agenda. The end of explicit acknowledgement of Canada’s commitments to support local democratic ownership, transparency and accountability, and inclusive partnerships coincides with increasingly directive policies and programs and contractual relationships that limit responsiveness, innovation, and adaptation. There has been no formal action plan on aid effectiveness since the last one concluded in 2012; a new one is needed.

GAC should also launch a meaningful national consultation process to create a National Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan, reinstating public engagement as a core part of the government’s global development program and provide a shared vision and clear metrics moving forward.

Part IV: Investing in Sustainable Development Globally

Canadian official development assistance (ODA) dropped from \$5.6 billion in 2012-13 to roughly \$5.1 billion in 2015-16. Canadian ODA now represents approximately 0.26% of Gross National Income (GNI). This is far below the long-established, internationally agreed target of 0.7% and leaves Canada roughly in the middle of its OECD peer group. If current funding levels are sustained, by the end of this government’s first mandate it will have the lowest average ODA as a percentage of GNI of any Canadian government in half a century. An ambitious policy vision, as expressed in the FIAP, will require ambitious investments.

Canada should commit to a ten-year timetable of predictable annual increases to the IAE, with the target of meeting the target of 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) going to ODA. Canada should also gradually increase the baseline level of humanitarian spending, to a level reflective of growing global humanitarian need and in step with overall growth of the IAE.

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Canada has a new policy framework for its international assistance. True transformation will require shifts in mechanisms and mindsets, sustained commitments to principles and partnerships of effective development cooperation and humanitarian action, and financial resources. If Canada can achieve this, it can be a global leader in contributing to a fairer, more sustainable and safer world.