

Canada's International Assistance Policy is a Bold New Vision for Advancing Gender Equality

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

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The Canadian International Assistance Policy was released today, a year after extensive consultations with Canadians, including Canadian civil society organizations. The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) welcomes the long-awaited launch of the new policy, which includes numerous positive commitments by the Government of Canada towards an ambitious and transformative international assistance framework. CCIC looks forward to working with the government, civil society organizations, and other development and humanitarian stakeholders to implement the policy in the months and years to come.

The following are CCIC's key messages, quotes, and key facts concerning the policy.

KEY MESSAGES

- We welcome the government's strong vision, commitment, and leadership in adopting a bold new agenda for Canada's international assistance, with human rights and gender equality at its centre.
- Now that this policy is out, it is time to move to action. Delivering on the government's intentions will require new programs and effective partnerships, including with civil society organizations, backed by strong capacity within both government and its partners.
- Moving forward, Canada's commitment must extend beyond good policy to include adequate resources. Realizing the potential of this ambitious new agenda will require ambitious new funding for global development and humanitarian assistance.

QUOTES

(attributable to Julia Sánchez, President-CEO, Canadian Council for International Co-operation)

"With its feminist stance, grounded in a human rights approach, the new policy represents a forward-looking vision for Canada's international assistance. This marks a significant and bold shift that puts gender equality and women and girl's empowerment front and centre in Canada's global agenda."

"While the new policy does not include everything we hoped for, it contains many things to highlight and celebrate – a feminist approach, a human rights-based approach, a focus on women and girls, focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and a strong affirmation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The government consulted us, and they have clearly listened."

"With the policy finally in hand, we are looking to the government to continue the discussion they began a year ago, and to engage meaningfully with civil society and others partners for the implementation of the policy and delivering on its vision."

"Delivering on this bold and ambitious new vision will require significant human and financial investments for government and its partners – including civil society organizations. We will be looking

for Budget 2018 to provide the resources needed to realize the ambition of this policy, with particular attention to increasing Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget."

KEY FACTS

- The new policy marks a clear shift in vision and focus, with a strong emphasis on gender equality.
- The policy has the potential to substantially advance Canadian leadership globally on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). The SDGs were adopted by all countries of the UN in September 2015. Canada has committed to implement the goals at home and abroad.
- The policy comes with clear targets for focusing future Canadian aid on gender equality and women's empowerment, and the establishment of a new local fund for women's rights organizations that will put Canada among the top OECD donors to such organizations. In the space of 5 years, the policy aims at having no less than 95% of its budget focused on closing gender equality gaps.
- With this new feminist policy, Canada joins the ranks of countries like Australia, Sweden, and Norway, who have either explicit feminist international development policies and/or strong gendered policies and plans.
- In addition to a feminist frame, the new policy will adopt a human rights-based approach (HRBA), pursued by other bilateral donors including Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom and Denmark.
- In addition to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, there are five other core pillars:
 1. Human dignity (specifically including health education, humanitarian assistance, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and food security)
 2. Inclusive growth
 3. Environment and climate change
 4. Inclusive governance
 5. Peace and security
- The policy also commits to multi-year humanitarian funding, and to dedicate no less than 50% of bilateral assistance to sub-Saharan Africa.
- The new policy comes without a costed funding framework to help implement the new vision. Budget 2017 saw no new increases to the aid envelope. In contrast, the Defence Policy earlier this week included a 70 percent (or \$13.9-billion) increase in funding for the Canadian military over the next ten years.