

3.3 Development

Canada has made major new commitments of development aid to Afghanistan and Iraq. This has had the effect of skewing development priorities in other parts of the world. Canadian forces have been engaged in trading food and water for intelligence about the Taliban. Using aid as a weapon to advance military strategy violates the principles of aid neutrality enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. It puts both aid workers and recipients at risk. Soldiers are not aid workers. Military roles (security) and civilian roles (reconstruction and relief) should be kept distinct. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) should be re-examined with a view to preserving this distinction.

The mandate for the current mission in Southern Afghanistan should reflect a balanced approach to building peace and security in Afghanistan. There are opportunities — for example, the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation — for Canada to support conflict resolution and peace-building activities by working with various factions and parties on the ground.

The Conservative government has also signalled it will be giving higher priority to Latin America in its aid program. With the exception

of Haiti and Nicaragua, all other Latin American countries are middle-income countries. Canadian aid should be focused on poverty reduction, not on promoting trade and investment interests of Canadian corporations or supporting the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda that seems to be behind the move to boost aid to Latin America. Sub-Saharan Africa and other low-income countries should be receiving higher, not lower priority. The Conservative government also needs to be pressed to keep the Canadian promise made to double its aid to Africa.

Across the planet, 50,000 people die from poverty-related causes every day. Another 800 million people go to bed hungry each night. One billion people live in extreme poverty. HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis cause (and are caused by) poverty as individuals and economies of affected countries are debilitated by these and other diseases. If we are to achieve global security, these causes of human insecurity must be addressed.

Poverty is a violation of human rights on a massive scale. In 2000, all members of the United Nations committed to "spare no effort" in tackling poverty by adopting the Millennium

Declaration. Governments also launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to meet minimum targets to reduce poverty, hunger, illiteracy, discrimination against women, and environmental degradation by 2015.

Eleven countries, including France, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark, have reached their commitment of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) commitment or have timelines for doing so. Canada, despite its relatively robust economy, is not among them. In fact, in 2004, Canada was ranked 14th out of 22 donors.

On June 28, 2005, the House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution calling on the federal government to set out a plan to increase international development assistance spending to 0.5% of Canada's GDP by 2010, as a step toward the UN goal of 0.7% by 2015. However, no new aid money was committed in the 2006 or 2007 federal budgets. The Canadian Council for International Co-operation calculates that Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2006–07 will be \$4.6 billion or 0.33 % of our Gross National Income (GNI), and based on the 2007 federal budget commitments, will remain at \$4.6 billion in 2007–08 but fall to 0.32% of our GNI. This is not even half the 0.7% target and is far below the OECD donor average of 0.42%.

GENDER ANALYSIS Development

Women and their families are disproportionately affected by poverty. Canada has a strong record of conducting gender-based analysis within the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). All funding projects and programs from the government of Canada must continue to undergo rigorous and effective gender-impact analysis to ensure that projects benefit women as well as their male counterparts.

Upholding aid commitments will benefit the lives of women in those countries/communities receiving funding.

The AFB will set Canada on a firm schedule to reach the 0.7% target within ten years, by the year 2017. The AFB will increase foreign aid by \$460 million in 2008–09, by \$802 million in 2009–10, and by \$1.2 billion in 2009–10. Furthermore, the AFB will focus its aid on eradicating poverty, be consistent with Canada's human rights obligations, and consider the perspectives of civil society and the poor, both in Canada and overseas. To ensure this, we will seek a regularly reviewed legislated mandate for aid spending by Parliament.