



CanWaCH

Canadian Partnership for
Women and Children's Health



CanSFE

Partenariat canadien pour
la santé des femmes et des enfants



Canadian Coalition on
Climate Change
& Development

Written Submission

Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2021 Budget

by

the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)

**the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health
(CanWaCH)**

and

the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D)

List of Recommendations

Part I: Addressing humanitarian needs and investing in threatened development investments in light of COVID-19

Recommendation 1: that the Government double the current annual official development assistance (ODA) from \$6.2 to \$12.4 billion over a five-year period, as an imperative step towards (i) addressing the looming global health and humanitarian catastrophe of COVID-19, (ii) enabling the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and (iii) re-establishing Canada's global leadership in solving core issues affecting Canadians everywhere.

Recommendation 2: that the Government increase Canada's international assistance envelope by allocating new and additional \$2 billion for immediate COVID-related interventions, representing 1 percent of Canada's domestic COVID response, and a first step towards doubling ODA to ensure a more just recovery.

Part II: Investing in a just recovery for a safer, more prosperous world

Recommendation 3: that the Government strengthen preparedness and disaster risk reduction mechanisms, through a climate finance commitment corresponding to its fair share of additional \$2.76 billion to be allocated as principal purpose climate finance between 2021/22 and 2025/26.

Recommendation 4: that the ODA prioritizes the most marginalized by dedicating (i) 50 percent of bilateral assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), low-income countries (LICs) and interventions in fragile contexts.

Recommendation 5: that Canada's ODA meets the Grand Bargain commitment of allocating 25 percent of the humanitarian assistance to local organizations, with at least 15 percent designated for women-led local organizations.

Part III: Enabling the effectiveness of Canada's international assistance

Recommendation 6: that the Government commit to a coherent feminist foreign policy oriented towards a more equitable and just recovery including transformative international assistance, debt relief, a feminist trade agenda, and diplomacy efforts geared towards the protection of public health, human rights and civic space.

Recommendation 7: that the Government undergo a regulatory reform for the charitable sector to transition from "direction and control" to "resource accountability" thus bolstering the effectiveness of Canada's international assistance.

Introduction

The current outbreak of the coronavirus (hereafter COVID-19) has ballooned into a global pandemic expected to result in [USD 8.5 trillion losses in global outputs](#) and [long-lasting negative impacts on the global economy](#). Shifting humanitarian and development priorities, the pandemic is severely threatening the progress made towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. With global poverty and inequalities exponentially rising, Canada's current international spending falls short of the ambition and the scale needed to address key global concerns that stand as prerequisites of the domestic recovery.

To address urgent humanitarian needs and protect development priorities, Canada's budget 2021 must demonstrate the political determination a just recovery requires. An immediate investment of additional \$2 billion towards the global COVID-19 response is a first step towards Canada's doubling of the official development assistance (ODA) over the course of five years. Such an approach is needed for the effective implementation of Canada's [Feminist International Assistance Policy \(FIAP\)](#) and foreign policy more broadly, which strive towards a fairer, more just world in the aftermath of COVID-19. Building on the values of human rights and feminist inclusivity, Canada's international assistance should enable local actors while prioritizing least developed countries and the most marginalized groups in their local socio-political and economic contexts.

Part I: Addressing humanitarian needs and investing in threatened development investments in light of COVID-19

Recommendation 1: *that the Government double the current annual official development assistance (ODA) from \$6.2 to 12.4 billion over a five-year period, as an imperative step towards (i) addressing the looming global health and humanitarian catastrophe of COVID-19, (ii) enabling the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and (iii) re-establishing Canada's global leadership in solving core global issues affecting Canadians everywhere.*

COVID-19 is exacerbating the already-existing vulnerabilities. With [71 million people pushed to extreme poverty](#), [265 million people likely to face famine if no actions are taken](#), and [1.5 billion students missing school](#), the severity, the scale, and the complexity of the crisis cannot be overstated.

To address the current humanitarian crisis and protect development investments of the last decades, Canada must increase its annual official development assistance (ODA). A strengthened support is required to prevent, mitigate, and respond to crises that impact Canadians and humanity more broadly. Far from [the global standard of 0.7 percent of gross national income \(GNI\)](#), [Canada's contribution of \\$6.2 billion for 2018/2019 stood at 0.27 percent of GNI](#). This is the lowest average commitment to ODA as a percentage of GNI of any Canadian government in half a century, placing Canada [below the average](#) among OECD countries.

Doubling annual ODA to \$12.4 billion (which still leaves the country below its international

commitments) over the course of five years is Canada's moral and economic imperative. This should include an immediate increase of \$2 billion, followed by yearly increments of \$1 billion (2.8 percent). Such an investment would put Canada on track towards its 0.7 percent ODA to GNI by 2030, while contributing to the realization of the FIAP, the Sustainable Development Goals and healthier, safer, more just societies in Canada and abroad.

This recommendation reflects the 2018 Finance Committee [Pre-Budget Consultation Report](#), the OECD [peer review of Canada](#), and Canada's [Civil Society Partnerships Policy](#), which call for increased, flexible, and responsive investments.

Recommendation 2: *that the Government increase Canada's international assistance envelope by allocating new and additional \$2 billion for immediate COVID-related interventions, representing 1 percent of Canada's domestic COVID response, and a first step towards the commitment of doubling ODA to ensure a more just recovery.*

The proposed \$2 billion for the COVID-19 response represents 1 percent of Canada's national budget to contain the pandemic and mitigate its economic repercussions. This would address rising food insecurity and malnutrition, inequitable health services and systems, heightened violence against women and children, disruptions to education, shrinking access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the pandemic containment in fragile contexts.

This funding would also support investment in multilateral efforts of the UN and the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, needed to advance the global response to the pandemic and ensure fast and equitable access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines, when available. These investments should encompass the support for civil society as critical providers of gender-responsive essential services, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups affected by COVID-19.

Part II Investing in a just recovery for a healthier, safer, and a more prosperous world

Recommendation 3: *that the Government strengthen preparedness and disaster risk reduction mechanisms, through a climate finance commitment corresponding to its fair share of additional \$2.76 billion to be allocated as principal purpose climate finance between 2021/22 and 2025/26.*

COVID-19 highlighted the need for strengthened preparedness mechanisms and investment in mitigation of and adaptation to complex emergencies. As climate change risks exacerbate the scale and the frequency of future crises, Canada's commitments to international climate finance must be reaffirmed.

Canada's increased ODA should follow [the recommendations of climate coalitions](#) to allocate additional \$2.76 billion in principal purpose climate finance as its fair share in the five-year period between 2021/22 and 2025/26. This should add to the current commitment of \$800 million annually.

To ensure the effectiveness of climate finance, Canada should boost its support for context-informed and locally driven civil society initiatives addressing the often-ignored area of climate adaptation. At least 50 percent of climate finance should be targeting gender-responsive climate adaptation programs.

Recommendation 4: *that the ODA prioritizes the most marginalized by dedicating (i) 50 percent of bilateral assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), low-income countries (LICs) and interventions in fragile contexts.*

Canada should ensure that a predictable and significant portion of ODA targets the most vulnerable – people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by complex crises and insufficient national capacity to address them. This would align Canada’s programming with principles of aid and development effectiveness and the global commitment to ‘leave no one behind.’

Recommendation 5: *that Canada’s ODA meets the Grand Bargain commitment of allocating 25 percent of the humanitarian assistance to local organizations, with at least 15 percent specifically designated for women-led local organizations.*

In line with [the Grand Bargain principles](#), the [Paris Agreement and Accra Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness](#), and the [G7 Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action](#), Canada’s international assistance must strengthen the capacity of national actors, including civil society. Localization of humanitarian and development assistance is one of the main requisites for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Civil society, especially [women’s organizations, are best placed to provide equitable access to social services, ensure sustainability of humanitarian and development interventions, and promote community resiliency](#). As the [OECD report shows](#), only 1 percent of bilateral assistance goes directly to local civil society. None of Canada’s climate finance goes to principal purpose gender equality, leaving women’s rights organizations engaged in this area chronically underfunded.

Part III: Enabling the effectiveness of Canada’s international assistance

Recommendation 6: *that the Government commit to a coherent feminist foreign policy oriented towards a more equitable and just recovery including transformative international assistance, debt relief, a feminist trade agenda, and diplomacy efforts geared towards the protection of public health, human rights and civic space.*

Developing countries are fraught between containing the pandemic and addressing the increasingly dire vulnerabilities of their populations. Canada’s efforts should minimize the burden of developing countries suffering from international trade interruptions and [debt servicing, which is eroding public health and broader social safety net](#) budgets.

Beyond debt suspension, Canada should promote multilateral debt cancellation, join the [European Union’s](#) initiative for [Special Drawing Rights](#), and issue grant and not loan-based assistance. This support should ensure a) the viability of global pandemic containment

measures, and b) the ability of national governments to maintain the chronically underfunded social safety nets. Trade provisions upholding human and workers' rights, containing clear accountability mechanisms towards host communities, and advancing economic priorities of developing countries are an essential component of a more just recovery.

A coherent foreign policy agenda guided by the feminist and human rights principles must ensure the mutually reinforcing role of Canada's trade, security, international assistance, and diplomatic interventions.

Recommendation 7: *that the Government undergo a regulatory reform for the charitable sector to transition from “direction and control” to “resource accountability” and in this way bolster the localization of Canada’s international assistance.*

Canada's charities are governed by common law interpretations of an antiquated statute. The time for a thoughtful and comprehensive reform is now. Canada's charities [employ](#) approximately 2 million Canadians, represent 8.1 percent of GDP and make up a core element of Canada's national identity. A legislative and policy environment that enables Canadian actors to do their best possible work, benefiting Canadians, is needed.

The sector is calling for a shift from the “direction and control” regulations that strip local partners of agency, to a “resource accountability” approach that rests on flexibility, collaboration and mutual accountability. This recommendation supports the recommendations of the [Consultation Panel on the Political Activities of Charities](#) and the mandate letters of the Ministers of [Finance](#) and [National Revenue](#).

This submission reflects the positions of the following institutions and their members: [the Canadian Council for International Co-operation \(CCIC\)](#), [the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health \(CanWaCH\)](#) and [the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development \(C4D\)](#).

Together, these coalitions count 156 organizations working nationally and internationally through humanitarian, development, peace and security, public health, environmental protection, and social justice efforts.

This submission reflects the insight of the [Canadian non-profit sector](#), employing 2 million Canadians, accounting for 8.5 percent of GDP and promoting Canadian interests and values at home and abroad. As we witness heightened interlinkages between global and local issues, these organizations are leading the provision of essential services, meeting the needs of the most marginalized, and contributing to a more equitable and sustainable recovery for us all.