

Ottawa, November 4, 2015

The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of International Development
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Bibeau,

On behalf of the [Canadian Council for International Co-operation](#) (CCIC) and its member organizations, I want to extend our sincere congratulations for your nomination today as Minister of International Development, and to welcome you to this interesting portfolio.

CCIC is the national umbrella organization that brings together around 80 of the main Canadian civil society organizations working on global poverty, inequality and humanitarian assistance. This includes one regional and seven provincial councils for international development, extending our effective reach to approximately 400 civil society organizations across the country.

Our members – non-governmental organizations (NGOs), unions, professional associations, and universities – work hand in hand with local partners in developing countries finding solutions for some of the most important development problems of our times. These groups are key stakeholders in the process of building a fair, equitable and sustainable world for all.

As you well know, global issues were front and centre in the recent election campaign. This is reflective of the importance Canadians place on our role in the world, and the pro-active leadership they want to see Canada playing. It also reflects the enormous challenges that humanity is facing. These require Canada to act on many fronts and adopt coherent policies on issues such as climate change, sustainable green growth, poverty and inequality, the refugee crisis and women's rights. These challenges transcend national borders and require a commitment from all countries to people, the planet, peace, prosperity and partnership - as we have been reminded with the recent adoption at the United Nations of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), an ambitious and inspiring set of goals aiming to transform the world we live in.

As the international development civil society sector, we have accomplished a lot in partnership with the Canadian Government in the past: Canada was recognized for its leadership on gender equality, sustainable development, peace building, and for its innovative and inclusive approaches to tackling poverty and promoting social justice. In 2008, working in partnership with the Liberal Party and the other parties in parliament, we saw the adoption of the [Official Development Assistance Accountability Act](#).

More recently, we have worked in close collaboration with your predecessor to support the adoption of the [International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society Partnership Policy](#). This policy is an important milestone in recognizing the unique role played by civil society in international development. It establishes the basis on which civil society organizations (CSOs) can deliver more effective international cooperation programs on the ground in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

This policy sets the stage for enhanced collaboration between CSOs and DFATD on several fronts. It has already helped foster new and innovative funding windows for CSOs to work on democracy and good governance; it has helped institutionalize engagement and consultation with CSOs around key and emerging sustainable development issues; and it has given space to include civil society representatives on government delegations, for example at the July Third International Conference on Financing for Development. We look forward to working with you on further implementing the policy in the coming months and years.

Beyond civil society, we look forward to engaging with you and your department on a positive and renewed role for Canada in international development, where we know that Canada can make a significant difference. In this regard, we urge you convene the Advisory Council to the Minister of International Development as a top priority, a new structure announced in concert with the CSO partnership policy, and which will ensure a multi-sectoral vision for defining the future of Canada's engagement on sustainable development issues.

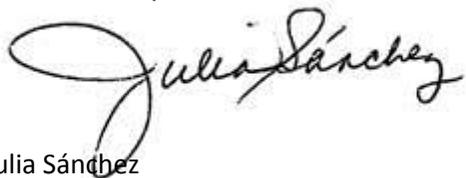
We also look to you, in your capacity as Minister of International Development, to provide leadership:

- By embracing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals through a national plan of action: using it as a global framework for DFATD's programming and providing adequate funding to developing countries, so that they can meet the challenge of realizing the goals, as well as to implement the new global goals at home;
- By providing more and better aid: our aid budget has been free-falling in recent years. Canada needs to reverse that trend. While we recognize the importance of leveraging other sources of finance for development, aid has a very unique and crucial role to play in improving the well-being of millions of people in developing countries, a role that can't be fulfilled by market forces or foreign investment;
- And by repositioning Canada both as an example and a leader on the global stage: including on climate change at the upcoming Paris Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Minister, you can count on the expertise and dedication of CCIC and the sector we represent to work collaboratively with you, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, and other relevant government agencies to ensure that we respond ambitiously and in a timely fashion to the important challenges that the world faces today.

I look forward to meeting you soon, and wish you the greatest success in your new mandate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Sánchez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Julia Sánchez
President-CEO
Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)