

News Release

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Canada Turning Its Back on the World's Poor: Foreign Aid Spending Hit Hard by Federal Budget

Canada is turning its back on the world's poor. Today, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced that there will be no further planned increases to foreign aid.

"What was needed from this government was a commitment to the world's poor who are suffering most as a result of the global financial crisis," says Gerry Barr, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC). "Instead, what we got was a turning of our backs on the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries."

CCIC was calling for 14% annual increases to aid spending for the next 10 years in order to reach the internationally agreed target for aid spending of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI).

The Conservative government had committed to continue the Liberal-initiated 8% increases through to 2010. And today it announced that the increases will stop. "What we needed was a 14% increase, what we got was zero," says Barr. "We are extremely disappointed."

Even with the 8% increase announced for fiscal year 2010/11, Canada's performance, in terms of generosity towards the world's poor, puts us at the back of the pack – 18th out of 22 donor countries. In fiscal year 2010/11 it is estimated that Canada's aid spending will fall to 0.33% of GNI.

"Canada's performance is nothing short of an international embarrassment," says Barr. "To announce a freeze to aid spending as Canada is about to host the G8 and G20 meetings shows a lack of leadership and is unconscionable."

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