

News Release

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CIDA Funding to CCIC Threatened Canada's Foreign Aid Community Risks Losing Strong Voice for World's Poor

CIDA funding to the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), Canada's pre-eminent coalition to end global poverty, is in doubt. A critical and well-respected voice for the world's poor risks being silenced if funding to CCIC is cut off.

CCIC's three-year contract with CIDA ended on March 31, 2010. Two months into a three-month temporary extension of CCIC's contract and no word yet from CIDA on the contract's renewal. In July, CCIC will start operating with no CIDA funds.

"Unfortunately, it's hard not to see de-funding as yet another example of the 'political chill' message this government has been sending to the development community," says Gerry Barr CCIC's President and CEO. "What we're experiencing here is punishment politics. Speak out against government policy and risk losing your funding."

CCIC has a long history of development work and CIDA funding and collaboration. Established in 1968, CCIC has been monitoring and analyzing federal policies on foreign affairs, aid, trade and peacebuilding. CCIC regroups approximately 90 Canadian non-profit organizations working both in Canada and overseas. Among them are religious and secular development groups, professional associations, co-operatives, labour unions and groups devoted to literacy, education and youth.

CCIC has given notice of layoff to all but 8 staff and has taken steps to liquidate its resources, including selling its office space, in order to meet costs associated with severance and near-term operations.

"This is extremely disappointing news," says Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada. "De-funding CCIC would mean that the government is shutting down diversity. Without a diversity of voices you will have weakly-debated public policy increasing the likelihood of bad public policy."

"This would be a loss to the development community," says Jim Cornelius Executive Director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and CCIC member. "CCIC is a strong advocate for the world's poor. Here in Canada, the development community looks to CCIC for leadership on issues of trade, aid and humanitarian assistance."

"We call on CIDA to continue its support for CCIC," says Robert Fox, Executive Director of Oxfam Canada and a CCIC member. "CCIC is exactly the type of organization CIDA should fund. Aid policies and programs will suffer if CCIC is not doing what it does best – analyze, critique and advocate for the world's poor."

Gerry Barr, Jim Cornelius, Robert Fox and CCIC's Chair of the Board Karen Takacs are all available for interviews.

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