

**Report on the CCIC/CIDA Dialogue 2003:
“Local ownership: Roles for Southern and Canadian civil society organizations”
March 20/21, 2003**

1.0 Introduction

The CCIC/CIDA Dialogue 2003 was jointly planned by staff from the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and the Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB) of CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). The aim of the workshop was mutual education about the concept of local ownership of development strategies, and what civil society can do to promote it. Background materials, including an Issues Paper on local ownership and case studies, were prepared by a consultant and by member agencies of CCIC. These are available on the CCIC website (www.ccic.ca).

Focusing on local ownership as a central principle and theme of CIDA’s policy to improve aid effectiveness, CPB and CCIC designed a dialogue that included members of CCIC, selected CIDA officials and counterparts from Southern civil society organizations (CSOs). The dialogue included plenary presentations¹ and workshops on the first day. On the second day, issues were further explored in a more limited roundtable format. The roundtable included several CCIC members, Southern guests, and senior officials from CIDA, with other participants as the audience.² Evaluation sheets indicate a high level of satisfaction from the dialogue—most of the evaluative comments were very positive.

The organizers wish to thank the participants, especially the guests from the South; colleagues for their excellent administrative and logistical preparation; the translation bureau; and the authors of the background materials.

This report summarizes the main points in the discussion over one and a half days, highlighting commentary on themes identified in the resource documents as well as others arising in the course of the conversation. The common threads of the Dialogue, as well as a commitment to maintain an exchange on complex issues relating to CSOs and aid effectiveness, are noted at the end of the record (pp. 14-15).

2.0 Setting the Stage: Plenary presentations

The co-chairs from CCIC and CIDA welcomed the participants and, with three guests from developing countries, offered comments in plenary to set the stage for the workshop and round table discussions to follow.

¹ Highlights of several of the presentations by Southern CSO colleagues have been published in the Spring 2003 issue of the CCIC journal *Au Courant*.

² The agenda for the event and the list of participants are appended to this report (Annex II).

Key points in the plenary presentations included the following:

Canada's development assistance policy: The place of civil society

- Canada's new policy has a strong focus on government-to-government development co-operation, emphasizing multilateral co-operation among donors and international agencies like the World Bank. The intent to enhance the capacity of the governments of the poorest countries is very much in order, after years of effort to roll back the influence of the state as a development actor. For many donors, however, this approach implies a restricted role for civil society organizations, as agents of service delivery, or as monitors of development strategies.

Civil society has other roles which are essential to the effort to combat poverty—in piloting innovation, for example, and offering a platform for marginalized people, strengthening the rights and voice of the poor.³ A reliable government development strategy needs a dynamic civil society.

- Yet the December 2002 OECD/DAC report on Canadian development assistance challenges North-South civil society partnerships as “supply-driven”, and claims that CIDA and Canadian NGOs are not doing enough to promote capacity in Southern countries. How Canadians answer that challenge depends on the quality of our partnerships, and how we understand and act on local ownership. While local ownership is a key principle for aid effectiveness, it also raises other issues—good governance, the terms for North/South institutional relationships, and capacity building.

There is an opportunity here for Canadian and other Northern CSOs, to show how they can respond, providing risk-taking capital to Southern counterparts, and working to enhance their capacity as development actors more generally.

Southern perspectives on development co-operation, civil society, gender equality and the role of the state

- ***Poor people in developing countries are largely excluded from the policy decisions affecting their future.*** In Africa especially, the investments by donors and governments have done little to reduce poverty over the last 40 years. Serious institutional weaknesses (in government, business and civil society) constrain any effective effort to change the picture.
- ***There are also limits to the effectiveness of civil society organizations***—modest financial and human resources, uncertain democratic values and practices, a weaker

³ See the CCIC note on roles of Southern civil society organizations circulated as a background note for the Dialogue.

presence in the rural areas, uneven representation of poor people, inadequate communications—but civil society as a whole can nevertheless make a substantial contribution to development.

As structural adjustment programs over the past 20 years reduced the capacity of states to respond to the needs of the citizens, particularly in relation to the poor and marginalized, new organizations emerged at all levels of society to sustain these functions in many of the poorest countries. CSOs also emerged to play important roles as catalysts in the emergence and consolidation of social movements; as promoters of citizens' rights; and as a force for mobilizing and strengthening citizens' organizations and alliances. Domestically, they face the challenge of ensuring that their popular legitimacy gains legal expression. Internationally, Southern CSOs face the challenge of globalizing links of solidarity—building global citizenship and complicity with their international counterparts, as they create alternatives to the dominant policies of the day. In this task, it will be essential to create a common “project” with Northern counterparts that offers some assurance of autonomy.

The example of an NGO like BRAC (the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), which has benefited from sustained support from Northern CSOs, including Canadian organizations, ***shows what can be achieved.***⁴ Since the independence struggle in 1971, BRAC has grown to be one of largest and most effective NGOs in the world, its own evolution a microcosm of Bangladeshi civil society. BRAC has benefited from sustained support from Northern CSOs, including Canadian organizations, from its very early days. It has also drawn on assistance from official donors to finance a major expansion of its programs. Its services, such as basic education, micro-finance and microenterprise support, now reach 31 million of the country's poorest people.

BRAC's experience holds an important lesson. There is no magic bullet for poverty reduction: a multifaceted and holistic approach is essential. Does BRAC's provision of basic education run the risk of replacing the legitimate role of government? When NGOs work with governments not as contractors but as partners, public resources reach the poor for whom they are intended. This does not happen automatically—early on, BRAC met resistance from local elites who siphoned off assistance to rural communities. BRAC responded by focusing its efforts on poor people, especially women, in the rural areas of Bangladesh. In doing so, the organization has not replaced government. BRAC has responded to situations where resources are not reaching poor and excluded people, such as women, because social and administrative obstacles impede government efforts.

- ***Against this background, the concept of “local ownership” needs to be scrutinized and unpacked.*** Ill-defined as it is, it is clearly about power, influence, capacity and responsibility—all concepts that need to be probed. It is also ideological and

⁴ See the case study of BRAC prepared as a background resource for the Dialogue.

political, being grounded in the donors' policy convergence with a renewed "Washington consensus" and the "Monterrey consensus" articulated at the Financing for Development Conference in 2002. The norms of the international community have been applied with considerable pressure to Southern governments, which have little room to move, caught as they are between the need to satisfy donors' standards for PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), and their citizens' demands for development. "Ownership" will not cover this dilemma. The NePAD (New Partnership for African Development) is an example: it started as an initiative by leaders of select African governments, and is now assumed to be the only path to development in the continent. It is clearly not a participatory strategy, however: how then do we locate it within processes of "ownership"? How can we reform the governance of international cooperation to respond to this tension between donor norms and democratic development of citizenship?

With this perspective, *what can we say about gender equality and ownership?* Gender equality has been turned into a technical consideration, with specialized words and tools needing "experts" to use them; it has become separated from the energy and politics of the women's movement. We have to take gender equality out of the institutions and into the women's movement. "Ownership" must speak to women's right and ability to make their life choices, to control resources. Local ownership from a gender perspective has a highly subversive potential to challenge hierarchies of gender and class. Orthodox anti-poverty strategies typically address women's basic needs, but not intangibles like dignity and self-esteem. Nor do they deal with the fact that men are often in charge in poor households.

Women's agency is central in their ownership of development processes. Donors should look for ways to help women take control of their own lives. Civil society may be particularly useful here. Gender roles may not be predetermined, and by focusing on interaction with government, civil society may offer an avenue for active citizenship. By cutting across geographic borders and institutional boundaries, civil society can provide an international voice for human rights. CSOs may be an avenue for active citizenship, enabling individuals to connect to broader processes of social change, engaging academics and intellectuals. The international community should in turn engage with the task of social transformation, supporting social movements and especially the women's movement. This will require global solidarity, space for dialogue across generations and across different social classes.

- *At issue is not just ownership, but the role of the state*, which Southern colleagues argued is not well understood by external partners. Many in civil society suggest that the neo-liberal "Washington consensus" puts the state in tension with many of its citizens as external policy conditions conflict with their interests. On the whole, civil society actors would welcome a more activist developmental state, with the proviso that it be held accountable to and by citizens. A strong state with domestic regulatory power and the capacity to act internationally is essential for development—civil society cannot do these things, and dependent states have almost no leverage. Many

CSOs and activists argue that external conditions, in the form of trade relations and policies, resource flows, and the business practices of transnational corporations, are substantial barriers limiting the capacity of the state in the South to perform its roles. There is a common belief that the contemporary development agenda is already decided, in which PRSPs are the successor to structural adjustment, and the state's role is to manage an externally imposed agenda. In the words of one participant from the South: "First we had structural adjustment. Then we had structural adjustment with a human face. Now we have structural adjustment with a mask."

There is a set of difficult challenges here: How can states ensure people's security—food and human rights, not just military security? And how does civil society engage with a process by which states perform their roles and civil society holds the state accountable, and vice versa? At bottom, the question is, "Who owns the development process?" There is a common assumption that government owns the process, but state institutions function within a dynamic political milieu, and their legitimacy (as well as that of civil society) must always be questioned. Accountability has to be defined and negotiated within a common agenda that identifies clear roles and interests, as part of a political process that requires constructive engagement by civil society. CSOs may be able to play an important convening role for such negotiation – government therefore should not simply marginalize civil society. For its own part, CIDA affirms that it will continue to work with governments, with the private sector, and with civil society. Development is impossible without a vibrant civil society and private sector.

Many also point to an irresponsible state in developing countries, but it is important not to be simplistic, and to understand the context that has fostered corruption, dysfunction and disintegration of the state. Clearly corrupt and irresponsible leaders and officials are part of the problem. But what conditions have led to this failure and why does it persist? The notion of ownership must include both the concept of legality, the right of government to represent a country in international fora and legitimacy, in which one takes account of power—on whose behalf is it exercised, including whose voices?

- ***Is collaboration between Northern and Southern civil society about "sharing" or "helping"?*** It's the former – the old model of "helping" no longer holds. Meeting financial needs is one tool among many to deepen our work together, not an end in itself. The challenge is to sustain a conspiracy to create a common agenda. There will be differences of opinion as we do so—we do not want a homogenized voice and movement. The women's movement has a history of recognizing diversity, while working towards a common goal and purpose. We do not want policy dialogue to create "consensus", but to be alive with diverse views and means in support of common goals.

CSOs are changing, and they work with many different interlocutors in development co-operation. It is misleading to suggest that Northern CSOs work only with CSOs in

the South. In fact, they work with diverse actors, including government and the private sector. Their local knowledge and their diverse counterparts may make them well-suited to play a convening and brokering role, bringing together different development actors. This convening role is something that government and the private sector may not be able to do.

3.0 Thematic Discussions in Plenary and Workshops: Capacity development, gender equality, and North/South roles in poverty reduction strategies

Key points in presentations and workshop discussions included the following:

Local Ownership: Canada's policy references

- Canada's policy statement and its memo to the DAC set out key premises which frame the discussion of local ownership:
 - Local ownership means that development strategies must belong to governments and to the people, and must reflect their priorities. Popular participation, especially to mobilize civil society and the intended beneficiaries of aid, is essential to the process.
 - Capacity development is essential to sustainability. Too often in the past, development assistance has not worked because it focused on transferring resources. Canadian NGOs can play a key role, not only in delivering products and services but in enhancing the capacity of southern counterparts.
 - "Partnership" is founded on an equitable sharing of rights and responsibilities. "Enhanced partnerships" will be underpinned by agreement on common objectives and responsibilities.

Local ownership and program-based approaches

- Local ownership as a concept includes both commitment and responsibility (a perspective emphasized by donors) and a bundle of rights within the development process—to set the agenda, to allocate resources, and so on. The latter is closer to the Southern view. These perspectives thus raise the questions, "Whose commitment? Whose rights?" Does "country ownership" rest with the national government, or is ownership more local, linked to beneficiaries? The latter emphasis directs attention to participation and representation, and accountability by governments and donors to the ultimate beneficiaries of development co-operation. The interests, power and policies of Southern governments may not be in line with the demands and interests of their own citizens. In the real world of aid-dependent relationships, therefore, "ownership" is not absolute, but is something to be negotiated; its asymmetries are both international, between North and South, and domestic, between governments and citizens.

This fact, in turn, directs attention to the capacity of various stakeholders to engage with the process, to the political will or energy behind a development agenda, and to the legitimacy or otherwise of political processes and actors. Too often, for example, governments see civil society organizations only as service providers, to the detriment of their role as innovators, representatives, or advocates of social change. In fact the knowledge and experience of CSOs, and their role as vehicle for citizens' civic participation, make them a valuable social asset in the interplay between citizens and governments.

- In recent years, projects have been strongly criticized as an aid delivery mechanism. They create administrative burdens and multiple accountabilities for recipient countries and tend to foster isolated islands of excellence. They also tend to create parallel resource streams within government and a disjuncture between donor-supported activities and overall government sectoral priorities and program delivery.

The widespread move among donors towards program-based approaches, away from projects as the principal modality of development assistance, carries implications for ownership. In program approaches, ownership of resources is shared between recipients and donors, with donors taking part in a dialogue about development agendas. The agenda or program is that of the recipient country or organization, and the approach implies not merely institutional support on the part of the donor, but also the imperative to engage other active donors as well as the Southern partners involved. Necessarily, in a program framework, local ownership is negotiated, with the assumption that the donors' part in the process will decline over time.

- Some participants questioned the impact of donor imperatives behind these new approaches. Do focused programming approaches, particularly those at a sector level, undermine the capacities of government and other civil society actors to tackle the lived experience of poverty as a complex human and political process? What capacities exist or should exist, domestically or internationally, to mediate this tension between the donors' need to focus and negotiate accountability and the community experience of poverty?

North-South Roles: The place of Northern CSOs

- The roles of Canadian CSOs are clearly changing as well, with a substantial emphasis on capacity development in their work with Southern counterparts. Canadian organizations have options of supporting government-led program-based approaches directly, particularly at the district or municipal level in the context of decentralization; of supporting participation in these approaches by Southern civil society, whether as networks or coalitions or as individual CSOs; and of supporting program approaches organized by Southern CSOs. The case studies prepared for this discussion show examples of these different patterns.

- There are several questions and opportunities relevant to future relations between Southern CSOs and Canada:
 - If Canada's relations with its countries of concentration are primarily government-to-government, what space remains for Canadian support to civil society? Is this determined by the Southern government or by its Ministry of Finance, which usually negotiates with donors? Has local ownership been appropriated by government and donors?
 - Will CIDA pursue its support for Southern civil society by the route of direct funding? This relationship is asymmetrical and should not be seen as assuring local ownership. What are the implications for accountability? For enhancing Southern capacities? For promoting public education and engagement in Canada? There is an opportunity here for Canadian Partnership Branch to prioritize North-South co-operation within civil society, based on capacity development and Canadian public engagement.
 - If CIDA will concentrate its development assistance in a limited number of countries, what are the implications for civil society initiatives that are regional or global in scope?
 - There is an opportunity for Northern and Southern CSOs to develop a common position on the participation of civil society in the analysis, planning and implementation of national anti-poverty strategies.

Local ownership and gender equality:

- There is no contradiction between local ownership and gender equality—indeed there can be no true local ownership without gender equality and the full participation of women in the development process. “Who is at the table?” remains a key question. The fact that PRSPs contain little on gender equality shows the inadequacy of public participation in their consultative/planning phase. The deficiency is important—if gender equality is not in a PRSP, it won't appear in a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp). PRSPs will influence CIDA's programming as well, being used as reference points in the Agency's Country Development Program Frameworks. While CIDA has procedures to assess gender equality in projects, it lacks these procedures for the new program-based approaches, or for programming based on budgetary support. Workshop participants challenged CIDA to engage with a wider network of social movements and actors as it develops its program frameworks, and to insist on solid gender equality analyses, relying on local voices.
- Rights-based approaches may offer ways of addressing gender equality, which is enshrined in human rights conventions. This perspective also fits with the idea of local ownership as a bundle of rights. The challenge is to create the tools and procedures to apply a rights-based approach, going beyond a simple checklist.

Local ownership: National development strategies, PRSPs, and civil society

- National poverty reduction strategies were a focus for discussion, including one workshop devoted to Ethiopia's experience. The Ethiopian example showed the contradictory nature of the process. That country's national strategy recognizes a role for civil society, contributing to the overall framework. Ethiopian CSOs welcomed the strategy, and sought to participate in public discussion of it. Public consultation to date has been narrow, however—largely urban and English-speaking.

CIDA is developing a new program framework for Ethiopia, with a focus on food security and justice, with the PRSP as its key reference point. CIDA would assess civil society programming in light of the government's commitment to its PRSP. There is a role for Ethiopian and Canadian NGOs in the development process. Nevertheless, Southern participants cautioned donors such as CIDA against following a single development path set by government, with civil society acting only as service providers. Government has used donors' endorsement of the national strategy to sideline civil-society opinion. Moreover, government capacity in Ethiopia to implement its anti-poverty strategy cannot be taken for granted.

Participants also spoke out against CSOs being limited to service delivery to meet the demands of donors or Southern governments, affirming an important role for civil society in social mobilization and participation, and in processes of democratization more generally. In a similar vein, both Southern and Canadian workshop participants challenged the legitimacy of plans such as NePAD, created by a particular group of leaders without consulting their citizens either through civil society or through representative governmental structures. Development requires not only an effective government but also a flourishing civil society; development assistance should also be directed to strengthening civil society.

- “Local ownership” exists in some tension with the overall agenda of the comprehensive development model. The latter is highly structured, closely aligned to orthodox macro-economic policies, and PRSPs have to be approved by the World Bank if they are to be used for debt relief. Yet “ownership” and a commitment to capacity development mean uncertain and open-ended processes, determined by local priorities and demands.

Local ownership and changing North/South roles within civil society

- The common emphasis by civil society on the need to intervene in policy making presents opportunities for North/South collaboration. Examples from West Africa demonstrated how farmers' associations could act in key debates on agricultural policy (specifically, on genetically-modified organisms), drawing on solidarity and exchange of information and analysis with Northern CSOs. Indeed, if financial transfers were not such a significant part of NGOs' activity (in both North and South), collaboration on policy research and development would command a much

higher profile, as would joint learning on common programming and policy matters. Closer collaboration with environmental organizations with experience in global shared issues (such as climate change for example), may raise some lessons for developing a shared agenda, in which ownership is even more important in the North, where many of the root problems remain unresolved. Often environmental CSOs have been key actors in bringing together research and knowledge with a common purpose and agenda for action. Others have played key convening roles.

The process of negotiating ownership should extend also on a South/South basis to share experience, construct a common agenda and engage collectively with the international system and Northern governments and CSOs. Some Northern CSOs have provided crucial support to regional and global processes in the South, bringing together the diversity of civil society interested in reinforcing the position of social movements in constructing common agendas in the South.

4.0 Round Table Discussion

The second day of discussion featured a round-table dialogue among 20 participants, including senior CIDA staff and representatives of CCIC member agencies. (See Annex II, List of Participants.)

After the chair of the session recapped key issues from the first day, members of the Round Table offered comments, as did some members of the audience. Points included the following:

Local ownership, PRSPs, and Canada's link to governments and civil society

- ***The Ethiopian PRSP was created with no real popular consultation.*** Although civil society organizations welcomed the development initiative, and tried to engage government, they were effectively excluded. Western donors simply endorsed the government position, and by doing so helped to stifle efforts at democratization. In the Ethiopian case the government turned this endorsement against civil society organizations, which continued to challenge their government on the substance and legitimacy of the government's poverty strategies. Ethiopian CSOs advised greater caution by donors. Given their doubts about their national government's capacity to implement and monitor its development strategy, CSOs would urge western donors continue their support for civil society and for lower levels of government. The latter may be a particularly valuable entry point for NGOs (Northern or Southern) to help build the capacity of communities, community-based organizations and local governments to work together more effectively. At the same time, promoting ownership from the "micro" level of communities to the level of national governments is difficult. Donors cannot build such bridges—they are a national responsibility.

Participants asserted that we share the task of ensuring a flourishing civil society in the South. Within CIDA, moreover, this issue should not be solely the concern of Partnership Branch. It may be necessary, for example, to assign a minimum percentage of development assistance resources to work with civil society. Current approaches recognize a role for civil society, but with no policy commitment of resources to support that role.

- ***Donors such as CIDA usually connect to national governments, however.*** Southern governments are often impatient for debt relief in a PRSP process or sceptical about too much consultation, so the politics on this issue are difficult. ***Are there also opportunities or options for new partnerships?*** In some countries such as Cameroon, pressures from donors in the PRSP process provided the first opportunity for civil society to consult with their government on poverty strategies. The relationships are necessarily delicate, because of the power differentials. Canada may have something to offer here. We do have a reputation for approaches to governance that include government, civil society and business. Donors should recognize that power is always at play and that resulting tensions can be addressed through ways of working that limit and/or counterbalance the exercise of this power. “Local ownership” provides a starting point but can be quickly caught up in the “messiness” of development cooperation in practice.

Development is complex: What do we know about local ownership?

- ***We never know enough, but we can and should act on what we know.*** The “recipients” of aid are the citizens of developing countries and the “donors” are not agencies like CIDA, but Canadian taxpayers, to whom we have to show results. From this perspective, local ownership is an empirical issue: does it help us show results? From another perspective, “partnership” is inherently unequal, and we need to create a more politically relevant term. How can we show solidarity with people in the South? They too are asking for accountability and results. From yet another perspective, we should not underestimate Canadians’ understanding of development processes. Our supporters understand complexity, and are interested in both measurable results and long-term processes.
- ***In the 21st century, aid and agencies like CIDA will become less important,*** especially by comparison with foreign direct investment. The question then becomes the role of Northern and Southern civil society vis-à-vis foreign investment—***can civil society challenge business to be more socially responsible?*** The task is to civilize investment, to ensure that it is useful and that its benefits are well distributed. Conversely, what is at issue in development is not aid or foreign investment, but people and the value they bring to policy. This is what is lost when governments speak exclusively to governments, and why participation is so important. There is a political issue here: the context in which local ownership is promoted gives Southern governments little time and space to ensure real political participation. Hence, they are typically caught between the demands of the donors and the IFIs (International

Financial Institutions) and the demands or needs of their own people.

- ***“Ownership” should be treated with caution because it is dispersed across many actors and places***—how then do we connect to these? It is unwise to rely on only one actor—hence the dissatisfaction with PRSPs. At its heart, local ownership touches on the ability of people in the South to address their own development challenges. Because there is a vast array of development actors, it is important that we not fragment this complexity by working in a narrow and mechanical fashion. For many civil society organizations, the “new” development model reinforces old patterns of top-down authority, exclusion and imposed imported models of development. Local ownership cannot be realized unless civil society is at the table from the beginning.

Implementing agencies, whether in government or civil society, may not represent the poor. The challenge of ensuring that the benefits of development assistance reach the poor should make us much more rigorous about our analyses and strategies. There is, in fact, a major shortcoming here in many national development strategies, which do not analyze and respond to structural issues within Southern economies. Typically, they focus on important issues like investment in education and health, but do not examine broader strategies of economic development and sustainability. In a similar vein, the currently popular sectoral approaches may be unduly narrow—development problems usually do not fit neatly into sectoral boundaries. Development agencies may be better advised to work with more holistic and flexible frameworks, such as those based on the concept of sustainable livelihoods. The latter proposes an asset-based approach, focusing first on what people living in poverty have, rather than what they need. This approach holds the potential to break the charitable “need-give” donor-recipient cycle.

- ***Our discussion of ownership focuses on “soft” aspects of ownership***—the sense of command of development activities. There is a “hard” aspect of the concept, however—legal rights of ownership related to contracts, shares of capital, and so on. In our discussion of social processes, we focus on the relationship between civil society and the state, and not enough on the relationship between civil society and business. If poor people in the South can work effectively with business, then “harder” aspects of ownership become important for them, as means of securing assets. Civil society may be able to play a role in advocating for more attention to these aspects of ownership, and for their more effective use. In a rights-based approach, people’s rights have implications for both “soft” and “hard” notions of ownership.

Local ownership, responsive programming, and development knowledge

- ***CIDA has shown vision in developing responsive programming*** as a means of engaging the Canadian public and taxpayers in international development, enabling Canadian CSOs to show results and accountability directly to their supporters. The DAC dismisses this as “supply-driven”. How does CIDA respond to this critique?

There is an obligation to challenge the “supply-driven” myth.

It should be acknowledged that the question about “supply-driven” programming is valid. The disbursal of CIDA budgets may suggest such a pattern, for example, if the observer does not know the dynamics between Canadian organizations and their Southern counterparts, and the ways that programs are created. More generally, it may be that local ownership is almost taken for granted by CSOs. Yet, it needs to be scrutinized and demonstrated. There is a need and a challenge to expose and aggregate our collective experience. NGOs and CIDA, both small players in international cooperation, may indeed have something to offer here. Together we have acquired a great deal of knowledge and experience, but this knowledge of the content and process of development for the most part remains in the heads of Canadian practitioners. We need to be much more systematic in accessing such knowledge and to do a much better job of reflecting on our experience.

From another perspective, *the current emphasis on “development knowledge” requires that we recognize people’s knowledge and life experience* as an asset for development action. The women’s movement in particular has a lot to offer, but we need to understand that many people in the South have been on the receiving end of “expert” knowledge and have sometimes suffered as a result of the application of this external knowledge. We need to create space and provide resources for processes that generate shared knowledge from practice. Changing old patterns requires that we acknowledge and respect the authors of local knowledge, and that we are guided by humility in what we don’t know.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Prominent Themes in the Dialogue

Chairs of individual sessions noted the following summary themes:

- Canadian CSOs are clearly ready to engage the debate about local ownership, and to locate themselves in it, although they have not been prominent as “stakeholders” to this point (as noted by the Issues Paper). Participants in the dialogue have been, moreover, comfortable with the issues. Canadian CSOs do need to examine their own work in light of the potential of program approaches to improve aid effectiveness.
- Local ownership is itself a complex subject, not a simple slogan or a metaphor, and clearly more than just the agenda or commitment of Southern governments. Nor is it absolute, but rather something to be negotiated among stakeholders with different perspectives and interests. Reaching a common understanding of the concept through dialogue with partners is essential if we are to assess performance against this principle.

- Local ownership cannot be understood without understanding gender equality—do women have equal access to society’s resources and power? Are women’s experiences and capabilities an integral part of development strategies, or are they excluded?
- The role of the state in Southern societies is a critical question: What kind of state exists, playing what roles—vis-à-vis its own citizens, and vis-à-vis the governments of Northern countries and the multilateral agencies?
- Participants registered a critique of both process and content of PRSPs—who sets the agenda, who speaks, whose voices are heard? Is the agenda already determined by donors and the international financial institutions?
- Civil society in general, including Northern CSOs, can bring important contributions to the process, with diverse roles, technical and contextual knowledge, and proximity to communities at the base. Equally, we have to guard against standardizing relationships; the more successful initiatives in the case studies were closely adapted to local situations and resourced through flexible responsive funding mechanisms.
- There remains considerable work to do within CIDA to better understand the place of partnerships within the principles guiding the new aid directions and programming approaches. Aid effectiveness requires a respect for diversity and should provoke a review of CIDA’s own culture.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

Two of CIDA’s Vice-Presidents, Josée Touchette (Canadian Partnership Branch) and Brian Emmett (Policy Branch), offered concluding remarks, as did Gerry Barr, CEO of CCIC.

Mme Touchette committed herself to continuing the dialogue begun in the two-day workshop. She noted that Canada exercises a moral influence internationally, and that we may be able to use that influence to create space for dialogue about local ownership. Citizens and governments need each other—we may be able to use our collective influence to promote that interdependence. There is a challenge here—how to use our knowledge and experience to ensure that local ownership is seen and understood differently. Increasingly we are basing our approaches to international cooperation on rights and the globalization of rights. Mme Touchette acknowledged that these debates are also continuing within CIDA. She remains committed to a continued dialogue nourished by our shared experience in programming.

Mr Emmett noted broad agreement between CIDA and civil society on the subject of local ownership. Two issues stood out from the discussion. First, the concepts are not well defined. We need to practise continuous learning within CIDA and with CIDA’s partners. Nevertheless, we should move forward, acting on what we know and learning and improving as we go. Secondly, there is the question of entrenching resources for

civil society. This is a much broader policy issue—should it be decided by edict? Resources for civil society will be probably better assured by innovative ideas and practice (on, for example, the lack of citizens’ rights to participate) than by quotas.

Both senior CIDA officials thanked the participants and the organizers for a thorough and thoughtful dialogue, and to the translators for their hard work.

Mr Barr concluded with a similar note of thanks. In reflecting on innovative proposals, he noted that CIDA also needs to ensure that there is structural space to receive creative and innovative ideas from civil society. Ownership is the point of departure for the development work of civil society. What space is there for different voices and innovative development approaches to be heard in state-directed development agendas? As one case study puts it, “Ownership matters because so many own so little, and so few own so much. Working to transform inequality and to redress injustice is a vision that many of us can own, and for which each of us can be responsible.”

Ownership casts essential light on the quality of relationships and is fundamentally about citizenship, which can be problematic for civil society as it may be for government. We need to support program analysis and interventions that address the complexity of social and political relationships and that include both people’s voices and those of beneficiary governments. We need to be rigorous in our analysis of experience, while establishing shared mechanisms for learning that affects our actions and policies beyond aid.

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Annex I CCIC / CIDA 2003 Dialogue

**Hotel Chateau Cartier,
1170 Aylmer Rd, Aylmer, Québec**

AGENDA

Thursday, March 20th, 2003

Morning

8:30 to 9:00 AM Registration

**9:00 to 9:30 AM Welcome to the Dialogue and Introductory Remarks
Co-Chairs: Michael Jay (Canadian Partnership Branch)**

CIDA & Gerry Barr (CCIC)

9:30 to 10:30 AM

Southern CSO Perspectives: Understanding Ownership and Equitable North/South CSO Relationships (Gerry Barr, Chair)

- ◆ Mamadou Goita, ACORD (Mali)
- ◆ Micheline Ravololonarisoa, UNIFEM (Senegal)
- ◆ Mr. M. Tajul Islam, Director of Public Affairs at BRAC (Bangladesh)

10:30 to 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 to 11:30 AM

Discussion of Issues Raised at Participant Tables

11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Plenary Discussion Chair: Gerry Barr

12:30 PM to 1:30 PM

Lunch (provided on site)

Thursday, March 20th, 2003

Afternoon

1:30 PM to 2:15 PM

Ownership, Capacity Building and Program Approaches: Implications for CSO Relationships
(Chair: Michael Jay, Canadian Partnership Branch, CIDA)

- ◆ Réal Lavergne, Policy Branch, CIDA: "Changing Relationships in Development Cooperation"
- ◆ Michel Chaurette, Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationale (CECI)

2:15 PM to 3:45 PM

Four Parallel Workshops

1) Ethiopia and Local Ownership of Poverty Reduction Strategies Coordinated by Partners in Rural Development. Southern resource person: Daniel Bekele OXFAM Civil Society Strengthening Project, Ethiopia; CIDA: Joanne Doherty, Ethiopia Program (Looking at mix of PRSP/CSO Initiatives and different roles in N/S Relationships)

2) Canadian CSO Experiences in Transforming Relationships with Southern CSOs Coordinated by

Cardinal Léger et ses Oeuvres. Southern resource person: Mamadou Goita (ACORD, Mali); CIDA: Dominique Raynauld, Canadian Partnership Branch, (challenge of working with ownership in context of highly unequal power relationships)

3) Ownership and the Promotion of Gender Equality
Coordinated by Inter Pares. Southern resource person: Micheline Ravololonarisoa; CIDA: Julie Delahanty, Policy Branch (Values orientation / roles of N and S NGOs)

4) Capacity Building Strategies and Ownership
Coordinated by CECI. Southern resource person: Mr. M. Tajul Islam (BRAC); CIDA: Réal Lavergne, Policy Branch

Workshops Report Back on 4 or 5 key issues guided by questions to be provided.

3:45 PM to 4:00 PM Break

4:00 PM to 5:00 PM Report Back and Plenary Discussion from the Workshops
Chair: Michael Jay, CIDA

March 21st, 2003

CCIC/CIDA Roundtable on Ownership and Roles for Civil Society

A Roundtable discussion with 20 CIDA, CCIC and Southern CSO participants. Other Dialogue participants are invited to witness the Roundtable discussion.

9:00 AM to 9:20 AM Welcome and Introduction to the Process and Issues
Chair: Andrew Ignatieff, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Chair of the CCIC Board of Directors

9:20 AM to 10:30 AM The Roundtable discussion on a theme and/or questions to be introduced by the Chair

10:30 AM to 10:50 AM Break

10:50 AM to 11:35 AM The Roundtable discussion on a theme and/or questions to be introduced by the Chair

11:35 AM to 12:00 Noon **Closing Remarks** by Len Good, President of CIDA, and Gerry Barr, President and CEO, CCIC

12:00 noon to 1:00 PM **Lunch**

1:00 PM to 2:30 PM **Full Plenary: Drawing Conclusions and Looking to the Future** Plenary discussion of the issues raised in the Roundtable by all participants
Chair: To Be Confirmed

ANNEX II: List of Participants

ANNEXE II: Liste des participants

Participants

ACCRA, Ghana Violet Awotwi

ACORD, Mali Mamdou Goita

African Medical and Research Foundation Canada Alana Rondi

Aga Khan Foundation Canada/Fondation Aga Khan Canada Chris Eaton

Aga Khan Foundation Canada/ Fondation Aga Khan Canada Salimah Kassam

Aga Khan Foundation Canada/ Fondation Aga Khan Canada Kevin Moorhead

Alberta Council for Global Cooperation Cherie Klassen

Alternatives Robert David

Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Canada/Canadian Nurses Association
Hélène Sabourin

Association québécoise des organismes de coopération Francine Néméh

Atlantic Council for International Cooperation Jean Arnold

Alternatives Pierre Beaudet

BRAC, Bangladesh Tajul Islam

Canada World Youth/Jeunesse Canada Monde Mathew Pearce

Canadian Co-operative Association Savannah Baskin

Canadian Co-operative Association Chris Johnston

Canadian Crossroads International/ Carrefour Canadien international

Karen Takacs

Canadian Executive Service Organization/Service d'assistance canadien aux organismes

Clare Bonnell

Canadian Feed the Children/Société canadienne pour nourrir les enfants

Jim Dahl

Canadian Feed the Children/Société canadienne pour nourrir les enfants

Emmanuel Mankumah

Canadian Foodgrains Bank Association / Association de la Banque Canadienne de Grains

Jim Cornelius

Canadian Labour Congress/Congrès du travail du Canada

Anna Nitoslawska

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Sophie Gebreyes

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Ruth Jensen

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Jacob Sterken

Canadian Nurses Association/ Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Canada

Mary Thompson

Canadian Public Health Association/Association canadienne de santé publique

Michael Adams

Canadian Public Health Association/Association canadienne de santé publique

Margaret Hilson

Canadian Society for International Health/La société canadienne de santé internationale

Ron Elliott

Cardinal Léger et ses oeuvres

Gilles Cérat

Cardinal Léger et ses oeuvres

Jean-Pierre Massé

CARE Canada

John Watson

CARE Canada

Nina Seahra

Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationale/Centre for International Studies and Cooperation

Michel Chaurette

Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationale/Centre for International Studies and Cooperation

Claude Perras

Christian Children's Fund/Fonds chrétien de l'enfant Abebaw Assefa

Christian Children's Fund/Fonds chrétien de l'enfant Alan Greenwood

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Matt VanGeest

CoDevelopment Canada Barbara Wood

CUSO Rosa Candia

CUSO Susan Learoyd

Développement et Paix/Development and Peace Gilio Brunelli

Horizons of Friendship/Horizons d'amitié Susan Murdock

Inter Pares Molly Kane

Inter Pares Sylvie Perras

Jamaican Self-Help Organization Marisa Kaczmarczyk

KAIROS (United Church of Canada/Église unie du Canada) Bob Fugère

Manitoba Council for International Cooperation Janice Hamilton

MATCH International Centre/Centre international MATCH Darlene MacLeod

Mennonite Central Committee Canada/ Comité mennonite central du canada
Justine Foxall

Mennonite Central Committee Canada/ Comité mennonite central du canada
Deo Namwira

Mennonite Central Committee Canada/ Comité mennonite central du canada
Donald Peters

One Sky Michael Simpson

Ontario Council for International Cooperation/Conseil ontarien pour la coopération internationale Shehryar Sarwar

Oxfam Canada
Civil Society Strengthening Program, Horn of Africa
Programme de renforcement de la société civile, Corne de l'Afrique Daniel Bekele

Oxfam Canada Raymond Genesse

Oxfam Canada Rieky Stuart

Oxfam-Québec Jean-Pierre Chicoine

Oxfam-Québec René Gravel

Oxfam-Québec Pierre Véronneau

Partners in Rural Development Karim Alibhal

Philippine Development Assistance Program/Programme de Développement et d'Assistance aux Phillipines Peachy Forbes

Presbyterian World Service and Development/Service et Développement Mondial de l'Église presbytérienne au Canada Richard Fee

Presbyterian World Service and Development/Service et Développement Mondial de l'Église presbytérienne au Canada Guy Smagghe

Primate's World Relief and Development Fund/ Le Fonds du Primat pour le secours et le développement mondial Andrew Ignatieff

Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation Lori Latta

Société de coopération pour le développement international Yvon Bilodeau

Société de partage Daniel Lussier

South Asia Partnership Canada/Société asiatique des partenaires — Canada
Richard Harmston

South Asia Partnership Canada/Société asiatique des partenaires — Canada
Barry Mackey

Terre sans Frontières Robert Gonneville

The Salvation Army/Armée du salut Allan Bacon

The Salvation Army/Armée du salut Brian Burditt

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada/La Société des obstétriciens et gynécologues du Canada Liette Perron

UNIFEM, Senegal Micheline Ravololonarisoa

United Church of Canada/Église unie du Canada Robert Case

USC Canada Laura Breuer

USC Canada Ann Thomson

VSO Canada Mary Stuart

World Literacy of Canada Mamta Mishra

World Literacy of Canada Jill Hart

World University Service in Canada/Entraide universitaire mondiale du Canada
Barbara Levine

World Vision Canada/Vision mondiale Canada William Postma

World Vision Canada/Vision mondiale Canada Kathy Vandergrift

YMCA Canada Sherry Campbell

CIDA Staff / Personnel de l'ACDI

Richard Bennett

Catherine Bragg

Elizabeth Clapham

Jesse Clarke

Françoise Coupal

Julie Delahanty

Robert Derouin

Jo-Anne Doherty

Janet Durno

Brian Emmett

David Hughes

Michael Jay

Réal Lavergne

Peter Paproski

Vincent Raiche

Dominique Raynauld

Michèle Samné

Naresh Singh

Leslie Tinney

Josée Touchette

Interpreters / Interprètes

Michel Côte

Jacques Falquet

Michel Limbos

Anne Morin

Technician / Technicien

Richard Perron

Rapporteur

John Saxby

CCIC Staff / Personnel du CCCI

Gerry Barr

Michael Bassett

Linda Brassard

Anne Buchanan

Denise Fournier

France Joncas

Lise Latrémouille

Brian Tomlinson

Jean Christie

Maria Desjardins

Sue Cass

Aziz Fall

Katia Gianneschi

Kristen Ostling

Karri Munn-Venn

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS**CCIC-CIDA Roundtable, March 21, 2003****Chairperson:**

Andrew Ignatieff, Director, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund and CCIC
Chairperson

Canadian NGO Participants:

Gerry Barr

Francine Némeh

Michel Chaurette

Gilio Brunelli

Rieky Stuart

John Watson

Molly Kane

Ann Thompson

Barbara Wood

Jim Cornelius

President-CEO, CCIC

Directrice, AQOCI

Directeur général, CECI

Program Director, Development and Peace

Executive Director, Oxfam Canada

President-CEO, CARE Canada

Executive Director, Inter Pares

Executive Director, USC

Executive Director, Co Development Canada

Executive Director, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Association

Southern Colleagues

Mamadou Goita

ACORD (Inter Pares chairs ACORD, a European / Canadian coalition of NGOs working throughout Africa) - Mali

Tajul Islam

Director of Public Affairs, BRAC - Bangladesh

Micheline Ravololonarisoa

UNIFEM - Senegal

Daniel Bekele

Advisory Committee for OXFAM-Canada's Civil Society Strengthening Program in the Horn of Africa - Ehtiopia

CIDA Staff

Brian Emmett

Vice-President, Policy Branch (for Len Good, President)

Josée Touchette

Vice-President, Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB)

Michael Jay

Director General, PSPO, CPB

Robert Derouin

Director General, NGO Division, CPB

Naresh Singh

Director General, Governance, Equality and Rights Directorate, Policy Branch

Barbara Brown

Director General, Knowledge Management