MOVING OUR COMMON AGENDA FORWARD

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT

A Progress Report from Civil Society—One Year On

March 2017
INTRODUCTION

In January 2016, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) produced a brief for the Minister of International Development entitled *Moving Our Common Agenda Forward: International development and humanitarian assistance priorities for the new government*. The brief focused on five international development and humanitarian assistance challenges and policy areas that Canadian civil society organizations (CSOs) have prioritized in recent years. The brief provided a short background on each issue and identified where the government has made progress and where there are still gaps. Finally, the brief made concrete proposals of what Global Affairs Canada (GAC), in collaboration with civil society, could do to move this important agenda forward. The brief included specific proposals for action in both the first hundred days and the first year of the government’s mandate. The recommendations in CCIC’s brief represented opportunities for the government to make early and easy advances around an agenda of interest to CSO stakeholders and partners. These measures would concretely demonstrate that Canada is truly back as a substantial contributor to global cooperation, and that the government is committed to a new and robust partnership with civil society. And they would support and enhance the implementation of Canada’s eventual international assistance policy.

CCIC advanced the proposals in its brief one year ago in the belief that they would enhance the capacity of CSOs to realize their full potential as independent development actors in their own right. This, in turn, would contribute in diverse and important ways to the achievement of the government’s policy agenda for global cooperation in international development, humanitarian assistance, peace and security, diplomacy, and international trade. The recommendations in the brief – ideas like providing strong support for the work of civil society as a key partner, providing forward-looking leadership on global development cooperation issues and challenges, and offering commensurate budgetary support that ensures Canada uses its development and humanitarian dollars in a manner that is both smart and impactful – reflect core priorities of Canada’s civil society organizations working in international development and humanitarian assistance. Many of these recommendations are about the way in which programs are delivered – innovations that would support the implementation of the upcoming policy statement. The importance of these “nuts-and-bolts” reforms was reinforced throughout the consultations, CSO submissions, and the official summary of the International Assistance Review (IAR).

It is important to note that the government, and Global Affairs Canada specifically, took important steps in 2016 to advance the humanitarian assistance and international development agenda - in line with the mandate letter to the Minister of International Development. Among other things, it launched the first comprehensive International Assistance Review (IAR) in over two decades. The government has engaged the broader international development and humanitarian community, and CCIC in particular, in dialogue and discussion on a range of policy issues, including on the IAR, and on humanitarian issues ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit. And, very importantly, it has reasserted the importance of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and human rights in Canadian global cooperation policy. This is beginning to translate into concrete action, with funding for sexual reproductive health and rights announced recently, and support to women’s participation and advocacy in development being actively explored. CCIC has commended the government and the Minister’s leadership in moving this positive agenda forward.
One year on, this report specifically assesses progress in the areas and actions identified in CCIC’s brief – areas and actions that are priorities for the CSO community in Canada – by indicating whether the government has fully acted, partially acted, or not acted with respect to each item proposed. It should be noted that this review is based on publicly available information. CCIC recognizes that further progress may have been made in some of areas, but is not able to assess that if relevant information has not been announced publicly or shared with the sector. That said, overall this progress report finds that the levels of attention given to, and the progress registered on, the issues outlined in last-year’s brief are quite low and leave significant room for improvement in 2017. Of a total of 18 specific policy recommendations proposed in the brief, this report concludes that none have been fully implemented, ten have been partially addressed (the government has publicly affirmed or referred to issues related to the recommendation and taken some steps to move the agenda forward), seven have not been addressed at all (no discernible progress with respect to the recommendation), and there is unclear information on one.

The body of the progress report below includes a summary of the five key areas, relevant text from the original brief for the different recommendations, and a summary of CCIC’s assessment on progress to date. The hope is that, now that the IAR process has concluded, this progress report will provide the basis for a robust discussion with the Minister for International Development, her staff and Global Affairs Canada on how the government and civil society organizations can work together to move these important agenda items forward over the coming months.

AREAS AND ACTIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT’S FIRST YEAR

THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP POLICY

OVERVIEW
The International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society Partnership Policy, launched in February 2015, marked a significant turning point in the relationship between the international development and humanitarian assistance community and the then Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). The policy, developed in direct consultation with civil society, establishes a new framework with nine clear objectives for how the government engages with civil society. It also identifies CSOs as independent development actors with their own set of values to guide their work (the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and the Humanitarian Principles), and recognizes the role that governments have to play in generating an enabling environment for civil society organizations to realize their full potential. Finally, the policy commits to an annual review of its implementation in consultation with CSOs. To help inform this process, CCIC has developed a set of milestones and indicators for the coming one to five years to benchmark progress. The Council plans to produce the first report against a set of clear benchmarks just ahead of the first consultation on implementation. The release of Global Affairs Canada’s own implementation plan would facilitate this review process. Finally, at the time of the release of the Policy, the government also announced the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Advisory Council to the Minister of International Development.
**First 100 days:**

a) Convene the Advisory Council – with representation from CCIC, the Provincial and Regional Councils, youth, labour, cities and environmental organizations, among others.

**NO PROGRESS.** The Advisory Council, announced in February 2015 in conjunction with the International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society Partnership Policy, has never been convened.

**First year:**

a) Review the implementation of the CSO Partnership Policy and work in collaboration with civil society to translate the policy into practice.

**NO PROGRESS.** There is no indication that efforts to implement the policy have been deployed. An implementation plan has never been made public. And there has yet to be a consultation on the policy, despite the commitment within the policy to hold annual consultations on its implementation. Finally, CCIC has been made to understand that the Partnership Policy – the first of its kind ever adopted by Global Affairs Canada – needs to be formally reaffirmed at the ministerial level, something which has yet to happen since the Liberal party took office in November 2015, and which has not necessarily been the case with other policies.

b) Establish a strategic partnership with CCIC.

**PARTIAL PROGRESS.** CCIC and Global Affairs Canada have engaged constructively over the past year on a range of different activities of strategic importance to both Global Affairs Canada and the Council, leveraging the engagement and expertise of CCIC’s membership, convening the sector around key moments, and providing a range of analytical products that help advance the thinking of both the government and the civil society community. CCIC welcomes the strong engagement by Global Affairs Canada with the Canadian civil society community over the past year, notably during the International Assistance Review. CCIC’s staff participated in nine consultations hosted by Global Affairs Canada, often acting as invited facilitators. The Council also organized eight of its own roundtables, including three executive-level discussions focused on Delivering Results – filling a key gap in the consultations. The Council believes that its engagement and contribution throughout this government-led process was mutually beneficial. CCIC also convened civil society organizations for a focused discussion with Finance Canada and Global Affairs around options for increasing Canada’s Official Development Assistance in 2017 and beyond. The Council also facilitated discussions between its membership and Global Affairs Canada on a range of key operational and contractual issues (as noted below), CCIC’s Regional Working Groups – the Africa-Canada Forum, Americas Policy Group, and the Asia-Pacific Working Group – have continued to engage in ongoing dialogue with the respective geographic branches at Global Affairs Canada. As a final example, Global Affairs is supporting a mapping project, part of a broader partnership CCIC is engaged in with the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) with the support of the International Development Research Centre. This support will help the joint CCIC-CASID program build an inventory of researchers working on international development and humanitarian assistance in Canada.

Given the significance of the relationship between Global Affairs Canada and CCIC, the Council still firmly believes that a less *ad hoc* and more strategic and formal partnership would enhance the impact of the collaborative efforts between the sector and the government. A formal partnership agreement between
CCIC and Global Affairs would also help to clarify roles and responsibilities that have not been properly discussed, understood or agreed to. Discussions to this effect have not taken place in 2016. CCIC looks forward to continuing, strengthening, and formalizing a longer-term and more strategic partnership with Global Affairs in 2017.

AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

First 100 days:

a) Convene a dialogue between Global Affairs Canada, Finance Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency and Canadian charities operating overseas to discuss the specific nature and practical realities that organizations face working in developing countries and humanitarian emergency contexts.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. CCIC welcomes the Canada Revenue Agency’s (CRA) consultations with Canadian charities as part of the review of regulations governing their “political activities”. The Council also welcomes the designation of staff at Global Affairs Canada and Finance Canada to monitor developments around the CRA process, including on political activities and direction and control. However, formal interdepartmental dialogue has yet to be convened.

First year:

b) Conduct a more comprehensive review of the enabling environment for Canadian charities operating overseas, addressing regulatory policies, legal and tax measures, funding and accountability mechanisms, and program requirements, looking to update existing provisions.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. CCIC welcomes the holistic nature of Canada’s International Assistance Review, and the complementary review by the Canada Revenue Agency, of some of Canada’s regulations governing charitable organizations. The suspension of CRA audits for so-called “political activities” is a positive step towards updating regulatory provisions that hinder the free operation of Canadian charities – although it is disappointing that organizations currently undergoing audits are still being required to complete them. The Council will continue to work with the government and press for the following: 1) the development of a new legislative framework for charities, developed in close collaboration with the charitable sector; 2) CRA supporting, rather than restricting, charities’ engagement in public policy processes; 3) the removal of barriers imposed by “direction and control” requirements; 4) the lifting of restrictions on “political activities”; and, in the immediate term, 5) the clarification and improvement of guidance around existing rules and regulations.

CCIC also welcomes Global Affairs Canada’s collaboration with CCIC to address important issues related to timesheets, overhead, currency exchange, and cost-sharing, although there is a delay in seeing these issues move forward. The Council also welcome Global Affairs Canada’s openness to provide informational webinars, in collaboration with CCIC, to Canadian civil society organizations regarding a variety of relevant programming issues, including new template for unsolicited proposals and the new results-based management framework. However, the Council is still waiting for a fuller affirmation of the government’s commitment to an enabling environment as both a principle and objective across programming, policy, and regulation. In the meantime, the outcomes of both the aforementioned reviews remain unclear.
A SHIFT TOWARDS MORE RESPONSIVE FUNDING

First 100 days:

a) Launch a pilot decentralized funding mechanism focusing on small and medium sized organizations.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. There have been no decentralized funding mechanisms tested or implemented, and no new funding mechanisms directed toward small and medium sized organizations. The provincial and regional councils have presented a proposal to Global Affairs Canada and the process is moving forward, but very slowly.

First year:

a) In collaboration with civil society, develop and test a diverse suite of funding mechanisms, including piloting highly responsive programmatic funding mechanisms, within Partnerships for Development Innovation branch – consistent with CCIC’s proposals on funding modalities.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. CCIC commends the government for relaunching the International Youth Internship Program and the International Aboriginal Youth Internship initiative. The Council is not aware of any other new funding opportunities within Partnerships for Development Innovation branch. Furthermore, many proposals submitted to various requests for proposals from different branches at Global Affairs Canada, have experienced long delays, in some cases as much as 18 months. This has forced many organizations to put their activities on hold – generating a huge sense of unpredictability among Canadian CSOs and their partners, and undermining the reputation of Canada’s development programming more broadly. The Council’s recent analysis shows that Multilateral Branch, and to a lesser extent Geographic Branch, are increasing as sources of support for Canadian CSOs, and in the past two years overtook Partnership Branch both in monetary terms and as a percentage of total Global Affairs Canada support to Canadian civil society. In 2014-15, support from Partnership Branch hit the lowest point in a decade. Meanwhile, the number of CSOs being supported has seen a steep decline in the past ten years. The average amount of funding organizations receive has increased, but this average is biased by a few organizations that receive large amounts of support well above the median.

b) Start a dialogue on addressing funding issues with multilateral and bilateral branches.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. CCIC welcomes the new multi-year funding calls for crisis response in Iraq and Syria, and most recently in the Lake Chad basin, and the government’s interest in continuing to grow the use of multi-year funding for humanitarian programming in protracted crises. However, further engagement is needed concerning the types of funding mechanisms available to CSOs through Partnership, Multilateral and Bilateral Branches, to ensure these are sufficiently predictable, equitable, flexible and transparent to respond to the diverse and responsive needs of CSOs, including, for example, in public engagement (see below).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

First 100 days:

b) In the context of the new Sustainable Development Goals, launch a meaningful and informed national consultation process to define a National Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan that reinstates public engagement as a core component of the government’s international development program and provides a shared vision and clear metrics moving forward.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. The government’s strategy on public engagement around international
development remains undefined. No draft public engagement strategy exists. However, following the release in September 2016 of a collaborative discussion paper from a CCIC working group, entitled Developing an Enabling Environment for Public Engagement in Canada: A Global Affairs Canada-Civil Society Partnership in the Making, Global Affairs Canada and CCIC have started a dialogue process with the working group that produced the report. Areas for collaboration are being explored, including sharing of best practices and the development of a substantive and transparent public engagement strategy around Canadian development policy and programs.

First year:

First year:

a) Against the backdrop of the SDGs, and in line with the Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan, begin to pilot diverse and predictable multi-year funding windows for public engagement with a range of programs and activities that cater to the needs of diverse organizations in regions across the country.

NO PROGRESS. CCIC is not aware of any new funding windows on a multi-year basis for public engagement.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OVERVIEW

The SDGs have ushered in a new era of global development cooperation, putting society, environment, economy, peace and partnership at the heart of future development efforts – both at home and abroad. The SDGs take a comprehensive, integrated and holistic approach to current and emerging challenges and the collective response needs to be equally unconventional. To realize these global goals, Canada will need to use an integrated, multi-sectoral approach that is not just whole-of-government, but whole-of-Canada. This will require situating sustainable development at the centre of everyone’s work everywhere, with a strategy informed by consultations with, and commitments from, a broad range of Canadian stakeholders focused on work domestically and internationally.

First 100 days:

a) Establish an inter-departmental Task Force to implement the SDGs, co-chaired by Global Affairs Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. The Sustainable Development Goals are an ideal framework in which to situate Canada’s ambitious national and international agenda. The Council understands that there is an inter-departmental structure at the senior bureaucratic level to engage around the SDGs. However, it is unclear how often this group has met or what its mandate is. Furthermore, there is still no inter-agency body at the ministerial level to coordinate Departmental efforts, and no concrete action plan engaging all levels of government and society. Beyond welcome references to the SDGs in speeches made by the Prime Minister and in documents like the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and the International Assistance Review, there has been no visible progress in implementing and integrating the SDGs in Canadian policy.

First year:

b) Guided by this Task Force and ahead of the next High Level Political Forum in 2016, produce a draft Strategy and Action Plan for implementing the SDGs at home and abroad. This draft should be the basis for
timely and meaningful national consultations with key stakeholders and for a new Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for 2030.

NO PROGRESS. Following from the previous recommendation, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs, reporting to the Prime Minister’s Office and coordinated by the Privy Council Office, would help better integrate the government’s social, economic and environmental policies into a coherent approach to sustainable development both at home and abroad. Canada should also establish a multi-stakeholder National Roundtable or Commission to engage Canadians more broadly – including the three levels of government, indigenous authorities, civil society, the private sector, academics and the Canadian public – on implementing the SDGs around solutions to sustainable development, both at home and abroad. Finally, Canada could volunteer in 2017 to present a Voluntary National Report at the 2018 meeting of the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that will indicate how it is moving forward on implementing Agenda 2030.

PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW
The private sector is a key actor in development and manifests itself in a range of ways. Research by CCIC demonstrates the various ways in which Canadian international development CSOs have been engaging with different private sector actors for decades. To ensure positive outcomes for development, each approach, at each level, needs to be guided by a clear strategy. Currently, beyond a weak approach for the extractive sector and corporate social responsibility, strategies which have not been made fully public, the Canadian government is lacking a clear strategy for either promoting or partnering with the private sector. There are no publicly disclosed means of assessing either the developmental or financial additionality of investing public funds in partnerships with the private sector. Nor is it clear that the Canadian private sector is sufficiently interested or motivated to participate constructively in development cooperation. More dialogue is urgently needed with key stakeholders on these important issues for international cooperation.

First 100 days:
a) Convene a series of multi-stakeholder discussions to further explore the challenges and opportunities in working with different private sectors in a way that ensures that each meaningfully contributes to sustainable development. These discussions can form the basis of a new Global Affairs Canada strategy on the private sector and development.

NO PROGRESS. Beyond the consultations held as part of the International Assistance Review, none of which focused specifically on the private sector and development, there have been no multi-stakeholder discussions that the Council is aware of to explore the relationship between the private sector and development, and no visible progress toward a new government strategy on this important subject.

First year:
a) Initiate research and informed dialogue that brings together multiple stakeholders (academics, CSOs, private sector actors and funders, different levels of government, etc.) around the opportunities for and challenges around broad regulatory and policy issues relating to the role of the Canadian and transnational
private sector in sustainable development, including in financing for development. Key issues to be discussed would include additionality, transparency and accountability.

**NO PROGRESS.** Again, there have been no designated multi-stakeholder research or dialogue initiatives to examine the role of the Canadian and transnational private sector in sustainable development that the Council is aware of. On a related and more positive note, the government does seem to be playing a constructive role at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee with respect to discussions around Private Sector Instruments. Canada appears to be providing positive leadership in the Committee’s thinking around financial and development additionality, and the importance of transparency and accountability in the context of partnering with the private sector for development.

**IV**

**POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**OVERVIEW**

At the time of the amalgamation of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), CCIC recognized that the process had the potential to generate greater coherence in Canada’s policies for poverty reduction and humanitarian response – termed policy coherence for development (PCD). However, the Council also cautioned against the real risk of increased policy incoherence, and the further subordination of development to trade and diplomacy. At the time, **CCIC proposed seven benchmarks** to help ensure that the amalgamation would in fact maximize real PCD. These included the affirmation of the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (ODAAA) as a guiding framework for the merged department, and the reaffirmation of Canada’s commitment to aid and development effectiveness principles and core humanitarian principles. Unfortunately, these elements have not become salient features of the new Department, and the evidence of greater PCD is unclear. The new SDGs represent a unique opportunity for Global Affairs Canada to ensure a more integrated approach both within the Department and across other Departments, driven by policy coherence for sustainable development – with the SDGs, the ODAAA and core humanitarian principles at the heart of this work.

**First 100 days:**

a) Reaffirm the centrality of the ODAAA, aid and development effectiveness principles, and core humanitarian principles for the work of Global Affairs Canada, and commit to integrating these principles into the work across the Department.

**PARTIAL PROGRESS.** The government publicly reaffirmed its commitment to the ODAAA in the discussion paper for the International Assistance Review, and has respected the reporting requirements of the Act. It is unclear, however, how the government is planning to enact (both internally and externally) the provisions of the Act and the guidance notes for the three criteria of the Act developed under the previous government. In the almost nine years since the Act came into law, Global Affairs Canada has never had a single consultation as per the provisions of the Act; Finance Canada has held five consultations, although these have all been **pro forma.**
In terms of aid and development effectiveness principles, CCIC is very encouraged by Canada’s new role on the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC). The Council sees this as a positive signal for the future of Canadian global development cooperation. Yet CCIC also notes the almost complete absence of any reference to aid and development effectiveness principles in the discussion paper for the International Assistance Review. This could suggest a lack of commitment to these important principles, including the role of civil society as a development actor in its own right – endorsed in Accra, Busan, Mexico, and more recently Nairobi. There has been no aid effectiveness action plan since the last one concluded at the end of 2011. It is not clear whether there will be one looking forward that reflects the conclusions of the meetings of the GPEDC in Busan, Mexico and Nairobi.

Finally, CCIC applauds the Minister’s strong and consistent defence of the core humanitarian principles. However, the Council is concerned by the absence of the humanitarian principles in the peace and security section of the government’s “What We Heard” summary of the International Assistance Review consultations, as these principles need to be fully incorporated across the policies and programming of Global Affairs Canada.

First year:
a) Provide strong political commitment to and leadership for policy coherence for sustainable development, which reflects core values of human rights, environmental sustainability, and inclusive development, with clearly delineated goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities across the Department for realizing this.

PARTIAL PROGRESS. The government has strongly endorsed and advocated for the protection and promotion of human rights, environmental sustainability, and inclusive development (including adherence to the Sustainable Development Goals and the core goal of leaving no one behind). Its strong support for gender equality and women’s empowerment and its commitment to developing a feminist foreign policy are most welcome – although it will be important to track what this looks like in practice, and whether it actually contributes to a gender transformative agenda. Furthermore, it is unclear how fully all of these basic components are being incorporated across policy and programming decision-making within Global Affairs Canada. A publicly-disclosed policy that clearly asserts the centrality of human rights, environmental sustainability, inclusive development and gender equality to Canada’s international assistance efforts across the three departments of Global Affairs Canada is needed. This policy must commit to regularly monitor and assess the impact of new and existing policies and programs in these areas, and determine where there is coherence and where there is not. The forthcoming policy statement, based on the International Assistance Review, could help fill that gap – at least with respect to Canada’s policies and programmes overseas. However, the government still has work to do on the domestic front in this vein (see section 2 above).

CANADA’S ODA BUDGET — TIME TO BOUNCE BACK

OVERVIEW
Canadian ODA has fallen, dropping from $5.6 billion in 2012-13 to roughly $5.1 bn in 2015-16. Canadian ODA now represents approximately 0.26% of Gross National
Income, far below the long-established, internationally-agreed target of 0.7 percent of GNI. Canada is now middle of its OECD peer group and the G7. However, recent polls and generous responses to a series of humanitarian crises demonstrate that Canadians are compassionate and generous – epitomized by the outcry over the Syrian Refugee Crisis – and committed to international development and poverty reduction. And while there are other sources of finance for development and humanitarian assistance, ODA is the most direct source for reducing extreme poverty and addressing its root causes. In the context of the new SDGs and the 2030 vision of leaving no one behind, the government should follow suit in its commitment to climate change with a commensurate commitment to sustainable development.

First 100 days:

a) Establish a ten-year timetable in Budget 2016 for predictably growing Canada’s International Assistance Envelope and moving towards the 0.7 target, including a clear rationale for why this target remains important to both Canada’s future and the world’s.

NO PROGRESS. The goal of dedicating 0.7% of Gross National Income to official development assistance has been endorsed repeatedly by the Canadian Parliament, most recently in November 2016 by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It is in the interest of Canada and Canadians for the government to make significant investments in tackling global challenges, which increasingly have repercussions for Canada and Canadians, and in building a fairer, more sustainable and safer world. Without substantial increases, this government risks having the worst record in Canadian history in terms of investments in international assistance. Like many in civil society, CCIC was concerned by the government’s claim in the discussion paper at the launch of the International Assistance Review that reaching the 0.7% target is “an unrealistic near-term objective.” The Council believes that doubling the International Assistance Envelope in the next five years and reaching 0.7% within the next ten remain entirely achievable. It is lamentable that the government failed in Budget 2017 to seize this opportunity. Any policy stemming from the International Assistance Review must be accompanied by a clear costed funding framework – and one that sets an ambitious goal that will see Canada back among its peers. The ambition of Canada’s funding for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance should match the ambition of its policy.

First year:

a) Dedicate 50 percent of Canada’s overall ODA to low income and least developed countries (LICs and LDCs) and fragile states.

UNCLEAR. Data for 2015-16 will not be available until March 2017. CCIC has reissued this recommendation as part of its submission to the International Assistance Review. This would represent a meaningful but not dramatic shift – Canada’s allocation in recent years to LICs, LDCs and fragile states has ranged from about 40-45% of the International Assistance Envelope.

CONCLUSION

CCIC is very encouraged by the government’s early recognition of the universal nature of the SDGs, and its commitment to implement them at home and overseas. The government urgently needs to contribute to reversing the trend towards deeper inequality; ending the gender discrimination that stymies human development; slowing the progress of climate change and helping the poorest adapt; and stemming the
human misery resulting from regional instability and recurring cycles of violence. Achieving these goals demands a transformative change in Canada’s vision and approach to global development cooperation. It also requires a whole-of-Canada approach, including by leveraging civil society strengths in program delivery, in advocacy and in engaging and mobilizing the public.

CCIC also welcomes the government’s comprehensive and consultative review of its international assistance policy and funding framework. As the national voice for the international cooperation sector, the Council stands ready and committed to work in partnership with the Government of Canada to elaborate — and implement — a comprehensive and effective framework that will guide Canadian development cooperation over the next five years and enhance Canada’s contribution to a fairer, more sustainable and safer world.

There are, to be sure, big issues and goals at stake that require a long-term approach. But even as Canada’s international assistance policy is being finalized, CCIC believes the government could, and should, have begun to implement many of the actions in cooperative leadership that were outlined last February in the Council’s brief to the Minister of International Development. The Council’s recommendations are based on well-established best practice in Canada and internationally. Most of them have little or no additional cost.

CCIC is therefore disappointed to note that little progress has been made in many of these areas. This is particularly frustrating given that the outcomes of the International Assistance Review have been delayed and remain unclear, and that high hopes for ambitious increases to the International Assistance Envelope were met with no new money in Budget 2017.

Equitable partnership and collaboration is about not just consulting your partners, and responding to them, on your own priorities – which the government is doing. It is also about building a common agenda, which advances different stakeholders visions’ and goals into something that is mutually beneficial for all. Accordingly, the Council hopes that the government will make many of the elements outlined above – which are key policy and programmatic priorities of the government’s partners in civil society – a central part of the forthcoming international assistance policy statement and its implementation. This new policy should lay out Canada’s vision and priorities for global cooperation over the next five years, and identify the specific strategies, policies, resources, and action plans needed to implement that framework – including any measures outlined here that have not already been implemented. Regardless of the scale of commitment in the forthcoming policy statement, the steps reiterated here are both achievable and necessary. It is not too late to move these ideas forward, and turn them into reality.