



Submission on the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) Draft Civil Society Partnership Policy

Submitted by the

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

August 8th 2014

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1. General comments on the process and policy

- (1) CCIC appreciates the opportunity afforded by DFATD to provide feedback on this draft policy – and more specifically, for efforts made by The Hon. Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and the Department to reach out to members of the international development community, for the two-month consultation period, and for the commitment to provide feedback on submissions received during the consultation period. This is in line with good practice and the spirit of partnership that this draft policy intends to foster. We trust that this policy will rekindle a new level of constructive dialogue and cooperation among DFATD and Canadian development civil society organizations (CSOs) - actors who together embody Canada's greatest expertise in the fields of international development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, public engagement and development policy.
- (2) CCIC and its members welcome DFATD's *Draft Civil Society Partnership Policy* as an important first step in an urgently-needed process for re-establishing a constructive relationship between DFATD and civil society development actors. Recent years have seen the deterioration of what was historically a very important partnership, both for CSOs and the government, for achieving their respective goals for international development. The change in, and drastic reduction of, funding modalities, accompanied by a lack of recognition of the diversity and value of CSO contributions to development, have had detrimental impacts on the programs of both CSOs and DFATD. CCIC and the provincial and regional councils for international cooperation have documented these negative impacts and made recommendations on how the relationship between CIDA/DFATD and the sector could be improved.¹
- (3) In preparing this submission, CCIC conducted an extensive consultation process with its membership. The process included two initial webinars on the draft policy, to elicit early feedback and seek input on the outline and key messages for the submission. Representatives from 37 member organizations participated in these webinars. Members of CCIC's *ad hoc* working groups (on humanitarian assistance, public engagement, funding mechanisms and the extractive sector), which together represent over 20 member organizations, were also involved in developing relevant text for the submission. CCIC sought feedback on its final draft submission from all its 75-plus members, and

¹ *Establishing an enabling environment for civil society organizations in Canada. Key issues affecting Canadian international development and humanitarian organizations*, Inter-Council Network and CCIC, 2014,
http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/what_we_do/june_2014_final_draft-full_report-establishing_an_ee_for_csos_in_canada.pdf

Putting partnership back at the heart of development: Canadian civil society experience with CIDA's call-for-proposal mechanism, *Partnerships with Canadians Branch*, Inter-Council Network and CCIC, 2012,
http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/what_we_do/2012_03_Survey_Report_e.pdf

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received comments from a dozen in this last phase, including the Provincial and Regional Councils, which together have close to 400 member organizations.

- (4) This submission is, therefore, a representative summary of the principal points raised by member organizations, and distills the Council's own longstanding policy experience on civil society and development, with over 45 years representing Canadian civil society organizations and working with civil society partners and the Government of Canada on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. CCIC has also brought to this process its extensive track record of contributing to key discussions on development and the role of civil society in development in relevant international fora. Finally, the Council has encouraged member organizations to participate in the consultation process independently, and respond directly to the draft policy on matters that are of particular relevance to them.
- (5) In reviewing the draft policy, CCIC and its members identified many important elements which form a strong basis for the policy being proposed. In this submission however, we focus predominantly on issues that we believe should be refined or amended in order to make the policy stronger, clearer and more comprehensive. Since this policy will have lasting implications for CSO work in the field, and for relations between DFATD and the Canadian civil society community, it is important that it be as comprehensive, accurate and nuanced as possible.
- (6) This draft policy is a positive response to the 2012 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) peer review of Canadian ODA, which specifically urged (the former) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to adopt a strategy for partnering with CSOs.² We are encouraged to see that the draft policy already reflects many of the best practices in donor government-civil society partnerships identified by the OECD-DAC in its report, *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*.³ In this submission we suggest several places where these lessons could be further used to strengthen the policy. We urge DFATD to review these lessons carefully, and ensure they are appropriately reflected in this policy.
- (7) Following the first High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in Mexico City in April 2014, Minister Paradis issued a statement in which he said: "Canada recognizes and supports the vital role that civil society plays in reaching development objectives. Civil society engages citizens in [...] decision-making processes that affect them. Empowered by the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly, civil society enables citizens to hold their governments to account, providing legitimacy to the governing institutions, which in

² The OECD DAC Peer Review of Canada in 2012 (page 29) identified the need for Canada to develop a CSO strategy. It noted: "Based on lessons from peer reviews [...], CIDA's new civil society strategy should include:

- a clear set of aims and strategic objectives, such as strengthening civil society in countries of focus;
- a definition of CSOs and NGOs;
- a clear rationale for why the agency is working with these different types of organisations; and
- guidelines for the necessary action to achieve strategic objectives, including principles and conditions for working with CSOs."

³ See *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, OECD, 2012, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/12%20Lessons%20Partnering%20with%20Civil%20Society.pdf>

turn ensures growth and sustainable development and reduces poverty.”⁴ CCIC and its member organizations welcomed this acknowledgment of the important roles played by civil society in all countries, including Canada. The Minister’s statement signaled a long-awaited and renewed commitment on the part of DFATD to ensuring a place for civil society in Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding and programming, following several years of uncertainty and tension in government-civil society relations. The draft Partnership Policy would benefit greatly if Canada’s commitment to protect and promote an enabling environment for civil society, as detailed in the Minister’s statement in Mexico, were more clearly reflected and articulated in it.

- (8) We believe that at its core, the purpose of this policy should be to fully integrate the expertise and diverse experience of Canadian civil society into development policy and programming at DFATD – as currently reflected in objective 4 in the draft policy. We therefore propose that this text be more central in the Purpose or Introduction of the policy. Achieving this main purpose will require a policy that clearly situates the roles, principles and objectives of Canadian civil society within the framework of how the government will work with civil society to realize its vision for development. It will require a policy that addresses the wide diversity of CSOs, large and small, North and South; one that acknowledges the full range of roles that CSOs play, including as policy experts and researchers, as educators engaging the public, and as constant innovators; one that gives space to CSOs to define their own priorities as independent development actors, in response to their own principles and ways of working, and partnering with a range of development actors and stakeholders; one that recognizes the importance of humanitarian principles to CSOs responding to humanitarian disasters and clearly identified needs; one that will create an environment conducive to realizing all of this through regular policy dialogue, responsive and diverse funding mechanisms, and supportive legal frameworks; and one that acknowledges that public engagement has a key role to play in building an active, educated and supportive public. To ensure that it moves from intent to practice, we suggest that the policy signal the development of an action plan, which clearly identifies key benchmarks for its implementation.
- (9) Finally, we recommend that the document be consistently normative in style, indicating how DFATD will use the policy, and how the policy will guide future DFATD partnerships with CSOs. Specifically, the policy should use the future tense throughout (e.g. “DFATD will do x and y”). This is of particular importance given a degree of skepticism felt by many CSOs in the face of a policy that seems to contradict recent practice and attitudes towards CSOs. As currently written, the draft policy seems to suggest in certain sections that good practice is already the norm, when this is not necessarily the case. A clear and forward-looking policy will be key in rebuilding trust between DFATD and the CSO community.

2. What is civil society?

In this section, CCIC suggests that DFATD should ensure that the final policy better reflects and accommodates the wide diversity of CSOs, including CSOs of different sizes, and to more clearly differentiate between how the policy applies to CSOs in Canada, in the South or both, and the implications of this with respect to their relationships with DFATD. We also point to the need for the policy to recognize

⁴ “Statement by Minister Paradis on Canada’s Commitment to Protect and Promote an Enabling Environment for Civil Society,” Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, April 17, 2014, <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/dev/news-communiqués/2014/04/17c.aspx?lang=eng>

the wider diversity of roles that CSOs play, in particular with respect to the roles of Canadian CSOs in Canada.

2.1 Reflect the full diversity of CSOs – according to size

(10) While the policy describes multiple CSO roles, the diversity in size and scale among different Canadian CSOs, their respective strengths, and their particular value-added for DFATD partnerships are not well reflected. While larger organizations bring enhanced capacity, significant resources and important networks to DFATD partnerships, small and medium sized organizations often have very specialized roles and expertise which allow them to perform important functions that differ from those of larger organizations – in Canada, and in the Southern partnerships they establish. Fundamental to their work is their ability to connect with and develop a community of support in Canada, often with smaller or hard-to-reach communities, unique demographic groups or certain professional segments of the Canadian public. This is often supported by a strong volunteer base, significant youth involvement and the commitment of Canadians to the work and goals of small and medium-sized organizations all of which can foster fresh approaches, creative problem-solving, and an invigorated sector. These relationships foster a sense of connection and engagement between specific Southern communities and projects and their respective Canadian constituents and donors, with organizations often connecting their work to a local issue and allowing for a deeper level of personal learning and growth. Small and medium-sized CSOs can also effectively and intimately share their development results and successes among their local constituents and through local media. Often they have a long history of Southern grassroots partnerships with select communities and sectors. As a result of these long-term relationships, small to medium-sized CSOs enjoy an in-depth understanding of the local context, history and cultures where they work. Due to their small size, these organizations are nimble, less burdened by bureaucracy, innovative by nature, and directly responsive to the changing priorities, needs and realities faced by their partners. The particular value of these organizations for partnerships with DFATD should be reflected in the policy, including in the range of funding mechanisms available for DFATD – civil society partnerships.

2.2 Distinguish between Canadian and Southern CSOs

(11) While the roles of civil society organizations with respect to governments and communities are similar in Canada and in partner countries, the relationships between DFATD, Canadian CSOs and Southern CSOs can be quite different. It is, therefore, important to clarify when the policy refers to Canadian CSOs, when it refers to Southern CSOs, and when it refers to both. In the draft text, these distinctions are often blurred or confusing.

2.3 Reflect the full range of roles that CSOs play

(12) The diversity of civil society roles described is quite comprehensive, and covers CSO roles in both development and democratic governance. These roles are equally valid for Canadian CSOs as for their Southern counterparts. Under the current headings, however, the draft policy misses some important aspects of CSO work and the roles they play – as policy experts and researchers, as educators actively engaging the public, and as change-makers developing ongoing innovative solutions to development challenges. The collective strength of civil society as agents of change is not explicitly referenced, and should be. CSOs come together as key actors, convenors and brokers at the national and global levels to promote and create the conditions for change. In this respect, enabling CSOs to work collaboratively will translate into conditions for greater dialogue, diversity and democracy.

- (13) To address these gaps in the policy, we suggest establishing a separate section to describe the role of CSOs as “Experts”, conducting research on a range of issues relevant to public policy, and drawing on evidence and experience to develop and design policies that fill policy gaps and generate programs that respond to social, environmental and economic needs. These roles are separate, yet complementary, from those that CSOs play as advocates.
- (14) As the document notes elsewhere, CSOs are often leaders in development practice, but also in raising awareness of emerging issues. CSO leadership in such areas should be explicitly recognized among the roles of civil society, and not simply as a component of their work as “Advocates”. To clarify this, we propose that the Partnership Policy specifically identify as a separate role the work Canadian CSOs do as “Educators,” to actively engage the general public through volunteer programs overseas and other initiatives that foster mutual respect, solidarity and understanding, and through public engagement and outreach activities that help raise awareness, change attitudes and build global citizenship and action.
- (15) We welcome the recognition given to CSOs as innovators, but caution that CSO work encompasses much more than specific innovative initiatives. Some of the most effective CSO development programming is the product of longstanding partnerships and lessons learned: it often reflects past innovations that have since become established best practice, or an ongoing evolution in programming that incorporates responsive innovations to address emerging and changing contexts. The policy should therefore value, facilitate, and provide space for existing innovative approaches borne out of significant experience, and should not limit DFATD’s partnerships with CSOs to “innovative” initiatives which focus on short-term technologically-driven fixes to address long-term complex development challenges
- (16) We believe this policy should establish objectives and actions that help facilitate CSOs, in all their diversity, to fulfill this wide range of roles. This requires appropriate legislative and policy frameworks, policy dialogue and funding mechanisms both in Canada and overseas, as well as objectives and actions that clearly correspond to these diverse roles.

3. Principles and commitments

In this section, CCIC suggests that DFATD should make the Istanbul Principles and human rights standards foundational to this policy as a whole. Given the acknowledgement that CSOs are independent development actors in their own right, we encourage DFATD to more clearly distinguish between those principles, commitments, objectives and priorities that guide DFATD and those that guide CSOs respectively, and to identify their points of difference, overlap, or complementarity. We note the need to understand the unique nature of humanitarian CSOs, and the importance and implications of the Humanitarian Principles that guide their work. We recommend much greater recognition of this distinction in the policy.

3.1 Referencing the Istanbul Principles is key to international development CSOs

(17) The draft Partnership Policy acknowledges and builds upon commitments that have emerged from dialogues between donors, recipient governments and global civil society representatives over the last decade in numerous intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder bodies and fora. We are especially pleased that the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*, and in particular the *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness (IP)*, serve as a foundation for this policy. The Istanbul Principles inform CSO's vision, values, and ways of working as development actors, and acknowledge the need for civil society organizations to constantly evaluate and improve their development practice. The Busan Principles – of country and democratic ownership, of short and long-term development results, inclusive development partnerships, and mutual transparency and accountability – are principles to which all development actors aspire, including CSOs. This submission suggests specific ways in which these commitments can be reflected more thoroughly in DFATD partnerships with civil society organizations.

3.2 Place human rights as the foundation of any Partnership Policy for international development CSOs

(18) CCIC, as proponent of the legislation when it was introduced, is particularly encouraged to see explicit reference to the ODA Accountability Act (ODAAA) in the draft policy. The ODAAA, as the legislative framework for all Canadian ODA, is the benchmark against which DFATD - including in its partnerships with CSOs - is accountable to Parliament. We feel, however, that the ODAAA could be better reflected in the intent and underlying principles of the Partnership Policy. To do so, we recommend that the Act's three criteria – its central focus on poverty reduction, its requirement to “take into account the perspectives of the poor” in developing countries, and for Canadian aid allocations to “be consistent with international human rights standards”⁵ - be emphasized at the beginning of the policy. We note that DFATD recently produced internal and external Guidance Notes for two of the Act's three criteria.⁶ These could further inform the approach and content of this draft policy, thereby ensuring greater coherence within the Department.

(19) States (both donor and partner country governments) are principally responsible under international law to protect, respect and fulfil human rights, including (among others) the rights of free association, assembly and speech, referred to in the *Busan Principles*, and in the Minister's Mexico statement. Globally, civil society organizations have a particular interest in securing space to assert those rights, through the establishment of an enabling environment that is conducive to CSOs fully realizing their development objectives. Together, DFATD, donor governments and CSOs can work to ensure that a human rights perspective is reflected in all Canadian ODA policies and practices. In particular, Canada should reassert its global leadership on women's rights issues in partnership with civil society, reaffirming an understanding of the critical role that women's organizations play within civil society and the priority that should be given to gender justice and women's rights in confirming commitments and objectives.

⁵ Greater recognition of human rights standards would also give greater prominence to one of the key Istanbul Principles, namely the first Principle around respecting and promoting human rights and social justice.

⁶ See “Guidance Notes for Organizations” under *The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, <http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/partners-partenaires/bt-oa/odaaa-lrmado.aspx?lang=eng>

3.3 CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, with their own principles and priorities

- (20) As noted by the Minister in Mexico – and recognized in previous High Level Fora and meetings in Accra, Busan and Mexico, and in the Istanbul Principles themselves – CSOs are independent development actors in their own right. To affirm this reality, we suggest that the *Purpose, Introduction*, and the *Principles and Commitments* in particular, more clearly distinguish between the different roles, commitments, objectives, guiding principles, and priorities that inform, guide and are relevant to the work of civil society, relative to those that inform and guide the work of DFATD as a government entity. For example, as a donor, the Government of Canada is committed to implementing the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, the *Accra Agenda for Action* and the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation*. The *Busan Partnership* recognizes the *Istanbul Principles* as the principal framework to shape the development work of civil society and hold CSOs accountable for their own development practices. These principles and commitments engage CSOs and DFATD differently. The Partnership Policy should, therefore, differentiate more clearly between principles and commitments that guide civil society, elements specific to civil society in principles intended for governments, and those principles that are complementary to both entities. In doing so, the policy will help create clearer expectations around the different, but complementary roles and contributions of civil society and DFATD in development. The policy should welcome the healthy tension that can exist between governments and civil society, which fosters important and constructive debate and learning.
- (21) States and CSOs (and other development actors) are committed to respecting the Busan Partnership noted above. CSOs are accountable to the *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness*. DFATD can help CSOs meet these commitments, by ensuring that the guiding principles for DFATD’s partnerships with civil society enable CSOs to maximize their capacity to be consistent with the eight *Principles*. DFATD funding should align with and promote these principles to ensure they are widely understood within the department and reflected in its respective partnerships with CSOs.
- (22) Given their specific expertise and longstanding partnerships with Southern CSOs, including in countries or sectors that are not priorities for DFATD, and their unique perspectives and contacts “on the ground”, Canadian CSOs can often bring attention to timely and emerging sector-specific needs and context-specific analysis. As the policy notes, “civil society contributes to development in ways that complement the roles and functions of governments.” The Partnership Policy, therefore, should not be solely driven by DFATD’s priorities of the day. It should also support DFATD to respond to the priorities of Canadian CSOs and their partners – priorities that should still align with the overall purpose of Canadian ODA, but that may not necessarily align with specific and changing DFATD priorities.
- (23) Consistent with the understanding that CSOs are independent development actors in their own right, the policy should recognize the expertise and the wide range of experience of Southern CSOs, and the longstanding partnerships of trust that Canadian CSOs have established with them. Often it is Southern CSO partners, rather than Canadian CSOs, that are program implementers. Long-established North-South partnerships between CSOs often outlive changes in governments, political upheaval and repression, wars and natural disasters, and should be seen as a unique resource to DFATD and Canada. They can provide DFATD with a depth of understanding, and long-term perspectives on specific contexts. These are indispensable for responding appropriately to complex realities, including in ways that bring a “developmental approach” to emergency response and humanitarian assistance, and conversely, that bring effective humanitarian assistance, when

required, to long-term development initiatives. These longstanding partnerships can help achieve sustainable development outcomes, which require time to be realized and would not be possible by DFATD alone.

3.3 Humanitarian assistance has its own guiding principles

- (24) It is important to note that CSOs working in emergency relief and humanitarian assistance are uniquely committed to humanitarian principles. As written, the document makes reference to but does not adequately address CSO-DFATD partnerships in these areas. Humanitarian work is guided by unique operating principles, which are different from those that guide other development initiatives.
- (25) Canadian CSOs involved in the humanitarian sector have decades of knowledge and expertise in Canada and abroad, and have become longstanding, trusted DFATD partners. We urge DFATD to draw upon this wealth of experience and to adopt a more formal approach of engagement with these CSOs that captures the Department's approach to humanitarian assistance and emergency relief. Accordingly, we propose a new section in the policy to address the unique nature of DFATD's partnerships with CSOs working in humanitarian assistance, emergency response and across the humanitarian continuum.
- (26) DFATD should commit to renewing engagement, collaboration and communication across the department with humanitarian CSOs, recognizing the humanitarian continuum and its diverse programming areas. This will support policy coherence across DFATD and ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided across the continuum, to include relief, recovery, emergency preparedness, prevention, disaster risk reduction and long-term development efforts.
- (27) The policy should include a commitment to ensure full respect and support for partners' efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance through timely and responsive funding on the basis of clearly identified humanitarian needs and according to the core humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independent humanitarian action which are essential to ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their beneficiaries. By delivering assistance in a neutral manner, organizations signal to all parties to a conflict that the actions of humanitarian CSOs are independent of any political or military agenda. In this way, humanitarian actors can gain access to conflict zones to deliver aid while mitigating the likelihood of harm towards staff.
- (28) With regard to the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, DFATD should prioritize learning and accountability initiatives and regular evaluations of international responses to humanitarian crises, including assessments of donor performance. Opportunities for learning, reflection and accountability are essential for effective humanitarian assistance, especially to determine the timeliness and effectiveness of current funding mechanisms. We also recommend that increased transparency regarding funding and selection criteria be included in any assessment exercise.

4. Objectives and Actions

In this section we propose that the primary objective of DFATD's Partnership Policy should be to establish an enabling environment for Canadian and Southern CSOs to contribute effectively to development. To facilitate this, we recommend three new stand-alone policy objectives, on policy dialogue, funding and supportive legislative frameworks. We propose that the policy acknowledge and provide support for the many purposes of public engagement, and the range of activities that Canadian CSOs conduct in this area – work that builds a foundation of public support for international development, and personal and social engagement among the Canadian public. We recommend that the policy not limit the types of partners for CSOs, but rather support partnerships with a broader array of development actors in the North and South.

4.1 Establish an enabling environment for civil society as the overarching objective

(29) DFATD's Civil Society Partnership Policy should reiterate the fact that an enabling environment is indispensable for civil society organizations to realize their full potential as development actors and perform their many roles effectively, whether in Canada or abroad. The main objective of the policy, therefore, should be to establish an environment (currently Objective 2) that creates the conditions that enable CSOs to be the most effective actors possible in development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, public engagement and policy dialogue, building upon the experiences and lessons learned from Canada's leadership in the Community of Democracies and other such fora. We therefore propose that the first and over-arching objective of the policy should be to facilitate an enabling environment for civil society organizations to operate effectively and independently - in Canada, and in the Global South. For the purposes of this policy, this enabling environment should be understood to include three elements: frequent and institutionalized opportunities for government – civil society dialogue; diverse, flexible and responsive funding mechanisms for CSOs; and supportive legislation and regulatory frameworks that are conducive to generating an enabling environment for civil society.

4.2 Include separate objectives on policy dialogue, funding mechanisms, and supportive legislative frameworks

(30) In the April 2014 statement cited above, Minister Paradis signaled that "Canada believes donors have a responsibility to promote an enabling environment for civil society. Canada intends to provide predictable, equitable and transparent funding opportunities through different modalities that support the diverse roles of civil society; and to promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue to inform and facilitate a diversity of perspectives and approaches". In order to fully reflect this commitment, we recommend that the Objectives section of the Partnership Policy be expanded to include three additional "stand-alone" objectives – one on regular and open dialogue between DFATD and civil society, one on funding, and a third on supportive legislative frameworks. As currently written, the draft makes references to these areas in a number of different objectives, but not as specific objectives unto themselves and without detailing the specific commitments found in the Minister's Mexico statement. We believe these are essential elements for any DFATD-civil society partnership, and should be consolidated as clear objectives of the partnership policy.

4.2.1 Regular, institutionalized policy dialogue between DFATD, civil society, and other stakeholders

(31) Regular, meaningful and institutionalized dialogue between civil society and DFATD is essential to establishing an environment of mutual respect and accountability, and to ensuring that Canadian

CSOs can contribute fully to informed and evidence-based development, humanitarian, and public engagement policy and programming. Though noted in the draft policy, a firm commitment to substantive, two-way exchange – of knowledge, expertise and perspectives on development practice and related policy – does not appear as a stand-alone objective. Because of its critical function, we propose that regular and predictable opportunities for meaningful dialogue between DFATD and civil society be made an explicit objective of this partnership policy, and that dialogue be seen as an essential element of effective partnerships between DFATD and CSOs. Routine opportunities for dialogue should be part of the policy’s implementation plan (see 42), and should include DFATD–CSO dialogue both in Canada and in partner recipient countries. The policy should also set out some basic principles and best practice for effective policy dialogue, as described in lesson 5 of the DAC’s *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*.⁷

- (32) In the same spirit, multi-stakeholder dialogue (including the private sector, research institutes, academics, and other development actors) will be necessary if DFATD is to achieve a whole of Canada approach to development assistance and sustainability in its initiatives. The diversity of civil society should be well represented in such multi-stakeholder dialogues and DFATD should take full advantage of representative CSO platforms to coordinate consultation and dialogue.

4.2.2 Diverse, predictable and responsive funding mechanisms

- (33) The Minister's commitment to multiple funding modalities (cited in 30, above) is as important as his commitment to DFATD-civil society dialogue, and should be reflected explicitly in the objectives of the partnership policy, and in the implementation plan to achieve it (see 42, below). Specific and dedicated funding will be needed to achieve the effective implementation of the policy objectives. Without adequate resources and diverse funding mechanisms tailored to the specific roles, capacities and needs of different sizes and types of organizations (as noted in Section 2 above), the policy will not effectively support the numerous and varied contributions that CSOs can make to Canada's development efforts. Currently, the draft policy makes no reference to specific funding mechanisms to support effective DFATD-CSO partnerships, nor is there a stand-alone objective that relates to funding.

- (34) A range of diverse funding mechanisms should be designed in consultation with CSOs. Drawing on CSO experience, best practices and lessons learned, DFATD can determine which mechanisms are most effective in what circumstances. Each funding mechanisms works, affects Southern partners, and relates to Canadian CSOs differently. It is important for DFATD to develop a range of standing funding mechanisms to support a diversity of CSOs, including small and medium-sized organizations. These mechanisms should prioritise long-term funding, the ability of Canadian CSOs to respond to their partners’ needs, and balance transparency and fairness with effectiveness and efficiency. They should provide different funding modalities for trusted, longstanding CSO partners with proven track records, and for new actors in the sector. They should draw on past and current good funding practices within DFATD and be informed by analyses conducted by the OECD DAC, among others. The DAC’s *Partnering with Civil Society* (Lesson 7) outlines several types of funding mechanisms that

⁷ This proposal for a specific objective on regular dialogue aligns with “Lesson 5: Make Policy Dialogue Meaningful”, in *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, OECD, 2012, cited in footnote 2. It states: “DAC members recognize the added value of dialogue and consultation with CSOs on development cooperation policies and approaches, on policy coherence for development, and specific issues where CSOs specialize such as gender equality and women’s empowerment, environment, climate change and human rights.”

DFATD should consider: multi-year framework agreements, core support, earmarked project funding, calls-for-proposals, co-financing mechanisms, and pooled donor funding.

- (35) This policy should include a specific objective that commits DFATD to establishing a publicly-accessible funding framework within a year or less of adopting this policy. This framework should be developed in consultation with civil society and should explicitly link funding mechanisms to the different capacities and priorities of both Canadian and Southern CSOs, as well as the different roles that CSOs play. Central to this objective should be the recognition of core or institutional support for building capacity of CSOs as a critical element of a coherent strategy to strengthen CSO roles and impact – and to support enduring and innovative development. Canada has played, and can continue to play an important role in underwriting the capacity and quality of civil society in Canada and developing countries.

4.2.3 Legislative and policy frameworks conducive to CSO engagement in development

- (36) In recent years, as noted by the Minister in his Mexico Statement, a growing number of governments have introduced legislation and policies that restrict or prevent basic rights and freedoms essential to fostering a robust and dynamic civil society, including freedoms of association, of assembly and of expression. For many Southern CSOs, their ability to access foreign funding has also been constrained and their areas of work limited. In these situations, the “rule of law” is in fact creating a disabling environment for CSOs. In order for civil society to flourish, it requires a rule of law that protects and promotes these basic rights and freedoms, including the right to seek, receive and use resources. To help realize this goal, Canada should continue to support diplomatic efforts to address restrictive or punitive policies and legislation that target civil society, through its engagement in the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society in the Community of Democracies. It should also continue its support to norm setting efforts through the work of the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and the Enabling Environment and of UN Special Rapporteurs, and should promote direct measures to support and strengthen civil society in developing countries.
- (37) In Canada, a strong and comprehensive Partnership Policy will help support an enabling environment for Canadian humanitarian and development CSOs. For example, DFATD could support and facilitate dialogue with other Departments and Agencies, in particular Finance Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency, regarding new and existing legislation and policies that may impinge on the ability and effectiveness of international development and humanitarian CSOs to operate to their full potential. The Partnership Policy should reference all of these enabling efforts.

4.3 Engaging with a range of key stakeholders in development

- (38) As currently drafted, Objective 7 of the draft policy gives exclusive emphasis to partnerships with the private sector, a current government priority and an important partner in many development initiatives. But the private sector should not be the sole focus of sustainable partnerships for development, as this overlooks many other partnerships that are equally or more important to CSO work, and similarly contribute to long-term development outcomes. CSO partnerships in developing countries extend well beyond the private sector, and include multilateral agencies, other inter-governmental bodies, international organizations, national institutions and various levels of government. To be more comprehensive, the policy should acknowledge this broad range of partnerships for development, all of which should be encouraged, and all held equally accountable for effective development results. The “effective partnership” objective in the draft policy should,

therefore, be expanded to reflect the full range of CSO partnerships for development, and should underscore the importance of development outcomes in all CSO partnerships supported by DFATD.

4.4 Public engagement serves a spectrum of purposes

- (39) Public engagement is fundamental to Canada's international development program. It would not be possible without the steadfast support and commitment of Canadians who care about international development and international cooperation, and without the social and political space for CSOs to engage in this important dialogue with the Canadian public. Widespread Canadian support for international development is reflected by the nearly three quarters of Canadians (72%) who agree that the Government of Canada should support public awareness of global poverty issues and the 79% who believe it is important for young people, in particular, to learn about these issues.⁸ Canadians have been involved and affected by public engagement as a transformative process, which has deep impacts: at the individual level, by shaping people's lives through their work, as volunteers, as consumers, or as donors; at the organizational level, through reaching a broader constituency, advocating on specific issues, and initiating fundraising initiatives; as well as at the global level, by contributing to Canadian citizens' awareness of and engagement in the fundamental objective of poverty reduction. Through public engagement programming, informed and engaged Canadians help to influence national development policy and create positive change in Canada and around the world.
- (40) Central to CSO's public engagement work is the objective of developing a sense of global citizenship among Canadians and facilitating the public's effective contribution to development cooperation, public discourse and policy dialogue on current international issues, Canada's role in the world, and more specifically international development and cooperation. Public engagement also serves to celebrate the important work being done by Canadians and to encourage people to reflect on the importance of international cooperation.
- (41) The Council and its members welcome the "engaging Canadians" objectives in the draft partnership policy. Public engagement is a longstanding and critical component of international development and cooperation, which has experienced a decrease in funding and attention by CIDA/DFATD in recent years. We are encouraged by the inclusion of public engagement in the recent DFATD calls for proposals. Building on this momentum, and our suggestion for a separate public engagement role under *What is Civil Society?* (see 14 above), we propose that current objective 8 be revised to reflect the full spectrum of purposes for which CSOs engage the Canadian public, the wide range of activities they undertake and the critical role public engagement plays in the sector.⁹ As it now reads, the draft implies that CSOs engage with the public primarily to raise funds, or to generate support for Canada's ODA. While both of these are among the potential outcomes, CSOs' objectives and activities in the sphere of public engagement are much broader, including awareness raising, changing attitudes, advocacy, empowering constituencies as global citizens, volunteer recruitment and action, and engagement in policy dialogue. This policy should embrace a broader interpretation of public engagement, and should commit to developing a policy framework for public engagement and implementing the corresponding funding mechanisms for the full range of public engagement activities (see also 34 above on funding).

⁸ *Canadian Engagement on Global Poverty Issues – Report of Results*, Inter-Council Network and Vision Critical, 2012, http://mcic.ca/pdf/Final_ICN_Global_Poverty_Poll_Report_Sept.6'12.pdf

⁹ As with the proposed objective on regular DFATD-Civil Society dialogue, this proposal aligns with "Lesson 3: Promote and support public awareness raising", in *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, OECD, 2012, cited in footnote 2.

5. Implementing the policy

In this section, CCIC proposes a new and critically important section for the policy, to indicate how the policy will be implemented and integrated into DFATD as a whole, with opportunities for periodic review.

(42) To be credible, and to respond fully to the OECD-DAC peer review recommendation (footnote 2), we strongly recommend that the policy lay out key elements of, and commit to developing within four months of the adoption of the civil society policy, a detailed action plan for how the government will implement the policy. This action plan should establish clear and measurable objectives for DFATD's partnerships with CSOs, consistent with the policy. It should set out departmental mechanisms to ensure that partnering with civil society is considered an integral component of all DFATD's programming, taking full advantage of opportunities provided by the merger of CIDA with Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It should reference the funding framework (see Section 4.2.2) which will set out a range of funding channels through which partnerships will be supported, and should designate indicative funding levels for its implementation. Finally, the policy should make direct reference to provisions for the periodic review of this action plan, in dialogue with CSOs.

6. Conclusion

(43) Ultimately, this Partnership Policy is about creating a long-term and sustainable partnership between the Canadian government and civil society in Canada and abroad. Such a partnership must find a balance between addressing the needs and priorities of government and responding to those of civil society. This means creating the conditions through such a partnership that will allow Canadian civil society, and its civil society partners around the world, to realize its full potential and maximize its contributions to development and poverty eradication. We believe that such a policy has the potential to set the gold standard for CSO-government partnerships and could firmly re-establish Canadian CSOs as global leaders in international development cooperation. The recommendations contained in this submission are aimed at strengthening the policy to achieve this end. CCIC and its members look forward to further engagement with DFATD in the finalization and implementation of the resulting policy.