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News Release

Canadian NGO confidence in CIDA funding standards undermined: CCIC calls for steps to restore trust in Canada's standards for aid spending

Canadian NGO confidence in the application of consistent funding standards by CIDA has been challenged in the past year with decisions which appear to have made little sense. Prominent among these decisions was a determination, one year ago, to suspend CIDA's funding relationship with the church based human rights NGO KAIROS.

Last week, at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, the CIDA President revealed that KAIROS program had, in fact, met all standards of effectiveness and relevance and, finally, had been recommended for funding by both the CIDA President and the Vice President for Partnerships with Canadians Branch. Minister Oda however stressed that it was her decision, and her decision alone, that shut down CIDA's funding relationship with KAIROS – notwithstanding the advice of her officials and her department.

All this, of course, flatly contradicted the story up to that point. Canada's aid Minister, and others on her behalf, had always said the decision to terminate funding to KAIROS came on the heels of a rigorous review of its program (which applied principles of development effectiveness) which had concluded that KAIROS' programming did not meet the standards.

As a result of this revelatory testimony, Parliamentarians have raised the question of whether the Minister has been truthful in her reports to Parliament. Canadian NGOs – and their Council – are raising a further question: How can they be confident that public support for their program proposals will be decided on the basis of public standards consistently and transparently applied?

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