

C U S J

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values

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President, Rev. Frances Leigh Deverell

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July 12th, 2010

The Hon. Lawrence Cannon, (Minister of Foreign Affairs)
The Hon. Peter Kent, (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Americas)
The Hon. Bev Oda, (Minister of International Cooperation)
The Hon. Rona Ambrose, (Status of Women)
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings,
Ottawa, Ontario

RE: Funding the NGO Community and in particular, CCIC

Dear Ministers:

I am writing to you to express my grave concerns regarding the many cutbacks to the NGO community which seem to be accelerating in the current year. I was dismayed to note the cutbacks to Kairos, an interfaith organization doing great work over so many years. Then you cut services to 12 women's groups because of their stand on abortion. Now I understand you are planning to cut funding to the Canadian Council for International Cooperation after decades of partnership work with CIDA.

It is through our NGO communities that most of the work is achieved in alleviating poverty and empowering people to help themselves and their communities. Having a strong NGO community that has access to the latest training and support is an essential part of our outreach to developing parts of the world. THE CCIC is a key source of information and analysis for our NGO community. It helps set the standards for ethics in development work. It helps with coordination when many NGO's are working on separate projects in the same area. It serves as a voice for the NGO community when there are concerns that need to be raised to CIDA and other government departments.

Development work is difficult work. In a cross cultural environment there will be many disagreements as to policies and approaches in this work. We cannot afford an ideological approach that demands only one way of doing things. All of the ideas and approaches need to be on the table in an atmosphere of respectful dialogue. I am extremely concerned that this government seems to be crushing any form of dissent by cutting funding to anyone who disagrees with them. Canada is bigger than any one approach. We set the tone for the world in managing diversity through respectful dialogue.

I appeal to you to support our NGO community, including the Canadian Council of International Cooperation. CIDA should continue this very important partnership and maintain the infrastructure that keeps our NGO's strong and healthy.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Frances Deverell,
President,
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice