

A woman wearing a green headscarf and a patterned dress is sorting through a large pile of dried beans. She is looking down at the beans with a focused expression. The background shows a simple building with a corrugated metal roof. The text 'AGENDA FOR FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE' is overlaid on the left side of the image in white letters on a blue background.

AGENDA FOR FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Twenty-six international development agencies encourage Canada to demonstrate global leadership by re-investing in food security for vulnerable people in developing countries.



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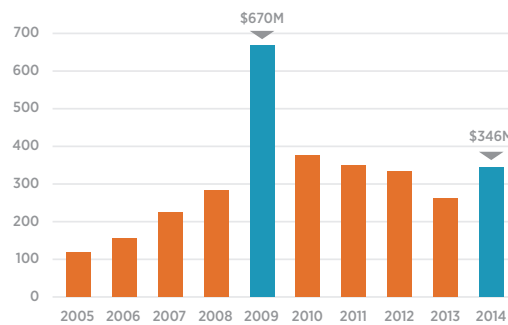
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The Canadian Food Security Policy Group has formulated recommendations by which Canada can demonstrate global leadership in food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture and climate resilience. Our recommendations are based on our understanding that food insecurity is caused by many factors.

Six years have passed since Canada launched its Food Security Strategy to relieve hunger and foster sustainable agricultural development in some of the world’s poorest countries. The strategy emphasized enhanced nutrition among the most vulnerable, increased food production by small-scale women farmers and promising research into long-term solutions.

Soon after adopting this comprehensive strategic framework, however, Canada began to reduce its investment in key programs areas. Funding for food assistance and nutrition continued to grow modestly, while support for research flat-lined and investment in agricultural development plummeted from \$670 million in FY2009-10 to \$346 million in FY2014-15 .

Spending on Aid to Agriculture
(Millions, CAD)



Source: Canada’s Statistical Reports on International Assistance

Several multilateral processes highlighted the importance of global food security in 2015, including the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the post-2015 Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

In light of these agreements, now is the ideal time for Canada to re-commit to long term global food security with innovative ideas and new investment.

THREATS TO FOOD SECURITY



Poverty

Nearly all of the world's 800 million chronically hungry people live in developing countries, three quarters of them in rural areas. Most rely on rain-fed food production systems (small-scale farming, herding or fishing) as their primary source of livelihood. They are too poor to purchase an adequate diet, lack the resources to invest in enhancing the productivity of their farms, and are often excluded from social, communication and political systems that might enable them to achieve a better life.



Climate Change

Climate change threatens food security by decreasing crop productivity, destroying fragile ecosystems and productive assets, damaging infrastructure, forcing migration, and increasing the risk of conflict over resources.



Gender Discrimination

Women make up 43 percent of farmers worldwide and provide nearly half of the labour on farms. Yet they have limited control over land, water and farm inputs, rarely benefit from agricultural research and extension and have little access to financial services.



Conflict and Natural Disasters

Major conflicts and natural disasters destabilize local food supplies and seriously disrupt food production systems. According to a recent report from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, farmers and herders suffer 22 percent of the losses caused by natural disasters, yet receive less than five percent of post-disaster aid.



Diversion of Farmland from Food Production

Today, more than half of global grain production is utilized for purposes other than feeding people directly. One third of all grain grown today is used for livestock feed and hundreds of millions of tons are converted to biofuels. Rising demand for food has sparked a dramatic increase in foreign investment in farmland in developing countries, driving up land prices and displacing local smallholders.



Food Waste and Losses

Approximately one third of all food produced globally is lost during production, post-harvest processing and distribution, or wasted at the consumer level, at a global cost of \$750 billion annually. Food losses are greater in low-income countries, often because of inadequate storage and processing facilities, while food waste is more common in wealthy countries.



Unfair Trade

Agricultural trade can enhance the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, but their livelihoods can be undermined by agricultural trade policies that allow markets to be flooded with cheap imports and constrain the ability of developing countries to support and protect small-scale domestic agricultural production. Dependence on food imports can increase vulnerability to market instability and price volatility while reducing the incentive to invest in agriculture.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 2009, when Canada adopted the existing Food Security Strategy, which included a focus on smallholder farmer, some positive results were achieved. However, a sharp decline in funding and a changing world indicate a need to re-invest and reconfigure our work in global food security.

Canada should continue to focus on smallholders, tailoring programs to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, in four inter-related thematic areas:

- I. **Improving livelihoods**
- II. **Promoting resilience**
- III. **Investing in public goods**
- IV. **Encouraging effective governance**

First and foremost, Canada needs to increase its public spending on agricultural development. Agriculture is central to the economy of most developing countries. According to the World Bank, economic growth in agriculture is at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. Given the significant decline in Canada's aid for agriculture, global leadership demands re-investment. Funds and programs should be directed to the following:

I. Improving livelihoods

1. Invest in Smallholders

Even with uncertain land tenure, degraded soils, unpredictable weather and weak infrastructure, smallholder farmers feed about 70 percent of the world's population, and do so on less than 25 percent of the world's arable land. Small-scale farmers nurture almost 8,000 livestock breeds and 5,000 domesticated crops, thereby

conserving genetic resources and biodiversity. Canada's focus on supporting small-scale farming should be maintained, and supported by disaggregated data on farm size.

2. Promote Opportunities for Women and Youth

A primary strength of Canada's strategy is its focus on women small-scale farmers. This should remain at the centre of Canada's strategy, and be augmented by a focus on youth. Canada should support women's leadership in rural organizations, help them secure tenure over productive assets and resources, provide training and facilitate access to information, communication and extension services, markets and market information. Canadian aid should help develop the next generation of farmers through programs that provide access to land and relevant post-secondary, vocational and business training. Data collection on the gender and age of program participants can improve the effectiveness of these initiatives.

3. Invest in Nutrition

Poor nutrition increases the risk of disease and death, hinders physical and cognitive development and undermines earning potential. Canada's food security strategy should continue to prioritize nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Most malnourished families depend on farming, livestock and fishing. Increasing the diversity of foods they produce improves nutritional outcomes. Because women usually decide what families eat, empowering women should be central to Canada's efforts.



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4. Promote Better Livestock Practices

Livestock provide small-scale farmers and pastoralists with food, manure for fertilizer, transportation and draft power, as well as income. Two-thirds of poor livestock keepers are women and in many parts of Africa, livestock are the only productive asset women control. Livestock act as a risk buffer when crops fail, and enable savings in more stable periods. Canada must enhance local capacity to protect livestock during disasters and support sustainable and resilient livestock practices. Canada should also promote the many functions of livestock for poor people, recognizing that animals bred for productivity alone may undermine both livestock and human resilience over the long term. Without ignoring the contribution of intensive livestock operations to greenhouse gas production, it is important to promote the ways in which small-scale livestock farming can mitigate climate change while contributing to food security.

II. Promoting resilience

5. Address Climate Change

Recognizing the strong impact of climate change on food security, Canada should seek and promote policies and practices that strengthen ecosystem resilience while enhancing farmers' ability to adapt to climate-related shocks and remain productive and profitable. Agro-ecological farming techniques can improve soil and water quality and maintain or increase on-farm biodiversity. Local livestock breeds are often better adapted to local environment and more resilient to climate change. Canada's recent commitments to

combat climate change in developing countries are welcome. Climate finance should include strong support to enable farmers in developing countries to enhance their capacities to adapt to the changes in climate they are already experiencing.

6. Link Emergency Relief to Long-Term Security

Canada's generous response to humanitarian emergencies should be matched by investment in reducing risk before disaster strikes. This could include early warning systems for food security, Community-Based Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction systems. Investing in the protection of productive assets (e.g. livestock) can reduce the impact of humanitarian emergencies, accelerate recovery and reduce the cost of disaster response.

III. Investing in public goods

7. Invest in Research and Extension

Research and extension services that are led by smallholder farmers, and centred on their needs can enhance innovation for economic, social and environmental benefits. Applied research in agro-ecology, seeds and biodiversity, indigenous farming practices and livestock health is crucial for devising lasting solutions to food insecurity. An emphasis should be placed on public research that is accessible and benefits farming communities first including promoting open data and knowledge sharing between practitioners.

8. Invest in Rural Infrastructure and Strengthen Domestic Markets

Public investment in infrastructure (e.g. roads, food storage, communication and public



facilities for markets) can reduce transaction costs and food loss, improve livelihoods of farmers, and lay the foundation for private investment by farmers and companies. Since 70% of all food is traded and consumed within national borders, the priority should be to strengthen local markets for food producers.

IV. Encouraging effective governance

9. Strengthen Farmer Organizations and Citizen Participation

Strengthening farmer organizations is a strategic investment in long-term food security. Farm organizations give voice to farmers' concerns and play a vital role in developing knowledge of local ecosystems. It is essential to empower women farmers so they can play a leadership role in these organizations. Leveraging the expertise of Canada's own farm organizations, the government should strengthen the capacity of smallholder organizations to build their local food systems, negotiate prices, procure credit, and influence government policies. Opportunities for expression, feedback and dialogue between and among farmers, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders are critical to the growth of agriculture sectors. Government should encourage development that strengthens farmers' participation and the ability of information and communication services to effectively engage citizens.

10. Support Good Governance Policies that Improve Local Land Tenure

Secured land tenure is crucial for smallholder farmers' agriculture as it dictates the size and type of investment they can make in their productive activities. Canada should support and promote a land policy and governance that ensure secured land access and tenure for smallholder farmers whose livelihoods depend on land, and water resources. Canada should support internationally accepted norms and guidelines to regulate investment in land, including promoting the human right to food at community and household level.

11. Ensure Coherence of Trade Policies with Food Security

Canada has made considerable effort to integrate development into the work of Canada's diplomats, but there is a need to consider trade in light of development goals. The government should make more effort to integrate the priorities and implementation of the SDGs in negotiating and drafting trade policy including the commitment to the world's most vulnerable people that they will not be left behind. In particular, trade policies must not increase the risks that global markets pose to small-scale farmers, nor undermine access to nutritious food and a government's ability to support poor farmers.



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For further information, including sources for all statistics cited, please see the full FSPG paper, *Recommitting to Global Food Security* at <http://bit.ly/1VjKHR5>

Members of the Food Security Policy Group

