

April 3, 2020

Honourable Karina Gould
Minister of International Development
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON

RE: Letter on COVID-19 and the International Cooperation Sector

Dear Minister Gould,

We are writing as representatives of Canada's international development and humanitarian community, including over 200 charitable, profit and non-profit organizations, academic institutions and individuals based in Canada and working around the world. Our sector includes over 2,000 organizations, employs some 14,000 Canadians on a full-time basis, and invests over \$5 billion annually to support global sustainable development and humanitarian assistance – frequently in close partnership with the Government of Canada. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and using feminist and human rights-based approaches, we support climate action, global public health systems, education, sanitation and hygiene, economic development, public engagement, good governance, and the broad achievement of the human rights to which all the world's people are entitled.

Minister, the current COVID-19 pandemic is challenging that work – our shared work. We applaud the Government of Canada's commitment to global engagement and cooperation to address the pandemic, including the allocation of \$159.5M through Canada's International Assistance Envelope. You, the Prime Minister, and your Cabinet colleagues have provided important global leadership in making a connection between the compassion and cooperation that underpin Canada's international assistance and our own national interest. Global Affairs Canada has made important and early commitments to flexibility and continued partnership. The ambitions and commitments of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, feminist foreign policy, multilateral engagement and inclusive trade agenda are even more important in this time of crisis. Canada should be a leader in applying feminist and human rights-based approaches in a whole-of-society and global response to COVID-19.

Though the challenges we face in Canada are severe, those before our Southern partners are far greater. We are committed to supporting this worldwide fight however we can. This includes making the choices within our own organizations and supporting choices by government that will help us all emerge from this crisis with stronger partnerships and a more equitable and sustainable future. We believe that strong, decisive and ambitious actions now – domestically and internationally – will help all emerge stronger from this crisis.

Yet, this pandemic also poses a grave risk to the vitality and viability of Canada's international cooperation sector. The Business Council of Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, along with their counterparts around the world, have called for unprecedented federal support for the widest possible range of organizations. International development organizations of all types and sizes must be part of this response. We welcome the Government of Canada's commitment to support Canadian employers, as well as individuals who work on a contract basis.

Imagine Canada has [rightly noted](#) that charities and non-profits are at particular risk given minimal reserves, low margins and a heavy reliance on revenues from philanthropy that have now dried up. Imagine Canada has estimated that registered charities – not including non-profit organizations – face potential financial losses this year of between \$9.5 billion and \$15.7 billion and layoffs of between 118,000 and 194,000 people. In a sector where a majority of employees are women, the gender dimension of these impacts is considerable. We endorse and echo Imagine Canada's call for broad-based federal action that will help Canada's charities and non-profits access resources, raise funds, sustain operations, retain staff and inform government decision-making going forward.

Canada's international cooperation community is at the frontlines of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic – as it has been in responses to epidemics from Ebola, Zika, and H1N1 to HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Canadian aid workers save lives every day and bring with them expertise in the intersectional and gendered impacts of pandemics. Women, people facing poverty, people with disabilities and marginalized individuals are often the primary users of services now being closed. Many women are primary caregivers responsible for supporting people affected by disease in their families and beyond – and therefore more vulnerable to infection themselves.

Many Canadian humanitarians, development workers and public health experts are now applying their expertise in Canadian communities. Those who remain abroad – and those working with partners in developing countries – serve the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. As you and the Prime Minister have noted, they also help to contain the disease's spread locally and globally.

While Canada's humanitarian and development professionals are key to Canada's COVID-19 response, they are also supporting ongoing global and community needs such as climate action, gender equality, education, economic development, good governance, food security and nutrition. Their continued contributions in these areas and others will be essential for an effective recovery worldwide, including by building and empowering local leadership by people in partner countries. Canada and the international community can emerge from this crisis with stronger partnerships and systems that will help build a fairer, more sustainable and safer world. As this pandemic shows, this is in Canada's own enlightened self-interest.

Telling the story of this contribution to Canadians is essential. The current context, while immensely challenging, gives us an opportunity to reshape mindsets and language around the value and spirit of development cooperation. More and more Canadians see clearly how what happens in the farthest and poorest countries of the world relates to their own lives here. We welcome your ongoing challenge to us to enhance communications with Canadians. We are keen to work with you and Global Affairs Canada to shape a new collective narrative for global cooperation that engages and supports a wide range of Canadians as organizations, networks, movements, volunteers, and citizens.

As our sector works to maintain progress on development around the world and respond to emerging needs, the sector is experiencing unique and unprecedented challenges in its work:

- Widespread repatriation is disconnecting Canadian organizations from their in-country partners, and travel restrictions are constraining programming globally.
- The risk of exponential infection in developing countries may force a shift in focus away from important planned programming to address immediate health and development needs.

- While Canada's government has been a strong advocate for the importance of multilateral action to address COVID-19, other countries' movement towards isolationism has raised the spectre of general withdrawal from international cooperation and assistance.

This last risk is existential not just to our sector but – in a global public health system whose strength is substantially defined by its weakest link – to all people everywhere. We are, at this time of global pandemic especially, in this together.

As we adjust to this new reality, our sector has developed a set of proposals to help inform your response to this crisis. These are complementary and additional to the recommendations outlined by Imagine Canada and reinforced in a [joint letter](#) of over 200 charities.

- Continue to support a globally coordinated and cooperative approach to address COVID-19 – including by working with partners to build a positive and important narrative about the importance for global solidarity now and always.
- Sustain and increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support humanitarian response and sustainable development. The \$159.5M so far announced for international assistance is from existing funds and represents 0.15% of Canada's federal response to COVID-19. Additional funding could be rapidly disbursed through a focus on reinforcing global health systems, scaling the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, direct expansion of existing partner programs – notably including those of Canadian organizations – and funding the UN's COVID-19 humanitarian response plan.
- Ensure that all Canadian organizations working internationally are eligible for all federal initiatives aimed at helping employers to retain staff, and that all initiatives to support individual Canadians are open to individuals working in international cooperation.
- Ensure that ongoing global needs like climate action, gender equality, education, food security and nutrition, economic development, and civic space continue to be supported during the response to COVID-19.
- Ensure that Canada's response to COVID-19 is guided by feminist and human rights-based approaches.
- Allow partner organizations to use development and humanitarian funds flexibly to support responses that most appropriately address urgent and emerging community and individual needs, to avoid the need for project-by-project adjustments.
- Fast-track funding renewals for multi-year international programs and program extensions as needed, and minimize reporting for ongoing projects and programs.
- Temporarily lift restrictions that limit charities to only providing funds to qualified donees.
- Create an ad hoc forum for Global Affairs Canada and other relevant departments to share advice and ideas with leaders in the international cooperation sector.

These requests are made in the spirit of partnership that informs all of our work. As a sector, we are wholeheartedly committed to supporting the government's efforts, through physical distancing at home and program implementation abroad. We look forward to hearing from you on these requests, to continuing our conversation in the months to come, and to working with you to tackle this crisis, help those who need it most and recover better together.

Sincerely,

List of Signatories Below

Organization	CEO / ED
Canadian Council for International Co-operation	Nicolas Moyer
Canadian Association of International Development Professionals	Jean Lowry
Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health	Helen Scott
Climate Action Network Canada	Catherine Abreu
Inter-Council Network	Jennifer Sloom

ACTED Canada	Rano Mansurova
Action Against Hunger Canada	Danny Glenwright
Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights	Sandeep Prasad
Africa Community Technical Service	Jeffrey Golby
AGIR Montréal	Ahmed Hamila
Agriteam Canada	Robert Francis
AidWatch Canada	Brian Tomlinson
Alberta Council for Global Cooperation	Leah Ettarh
Aléas	Marie-Claude Du Cap
Alternatives	Michel Lambert
Amnesty International Canada (English branch)	Alex Neve
Amref Health Africa in Canada	Onome Ako
AQANU	E. Bazile
Architecture Sans Frontières Québec	Bruno Demers
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development	Mange Ram Adhana
Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)	Michèle Asselin
Atlantic Council for International Cooperation	Jennifer Sloom
Avocats sans frontières Canada	Pascal Paradis
Bhutan Canada Foundation	Kent Schroeder
British Columbia Council for International Cooperation	Michael Simpson
Calgary Professional Chapter of Engineers Without Borders Canada	Adtya Chaudhuri
Canada Center for information and Knowledge	Imam Uddin

Canada Sierra Leone Friendship Society Inc.	Zainab Mansaray
Canada World Youth	Susan Handrigan
CANADEM	Paul LaRose-Edwards
Canadian Association of Midwives	Jamie Robinson
Canadian Bar Association International Initiatives	Jennifer Johnson
Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology	Michael Frishkopf
Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity	Calla Barnett / Cameron Aitken
Canadian Christian Relief and Development Association	Laura Solberg
Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research	Charles Larson
Canadian Feed the Children	Jacquelyn Wright
Canadian Foodgrains Bank	Jim Cornelius
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network	Richard Elliott
Canadian Humanitarian	Dr. Richard Northcott
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	Karin Achtelstetter
Canadian Network for International Surgery	Dr. Ronald Lett
Canadian Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases	Alison Krentel
Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief	Kathrina Loeffler
Canadian Society for International Health	Eva Slawecki
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan	Lauryn Oates
CARE Canada	Barbara Grantham
Carrefour de solidarité internationale	Etienne Doyon
Carrefour d'Éducation à la Solidarité Internationale de Québec (CÉSIQ)	Jean Cloutier
Casa Pueblito	Carl Melvin
CAUSE Canada	Wendy Fehr
CAWST	Shauna Curry
CCISD	Robert Beaudry
CDF Canada	Ben Andre
CECI	Claudia Black

Centre de Recherche en Santé Publique - Axe Une Seule Santé du Monde	Hélène Carabin
Centre de solidarité internationale du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	Sabrina Gauvreau
Centre for Sustainable Access to Health in Africa	Dr Babatunde Fakunle
CESO (Canadian Executive Service Organization)	Wendy Harris
Change for Children	Lorraine Swift
Children Believe	Dave Wilson (Interim)
Climate Change Facilitation Project (CCFP)	Michael Hope-Simpson
Clowns Sans Frontières	Katel Le Fustec
Coady Institute	Gord Cunningham
CODE	Scott Walter
Collaboration Santé Internationale	Pierrette Defoy Dolbec
Comité de Solidarité/Trois-Rivières	Jean-Marc
Community Conflict Response Options International (CCROI)	Sekou Musa Kromah
Cowater International	David Baron
Crossroads International	Heather Shapter
Cuso International	Glenn Mifflin
Cyclo Nord-Sud	Rémi Laurent
Dalhousie University, Faculty of Agriculture	Natalie Cole
Department of International Development Studies, Dalhousie University	Theresa Ulicki
Desarrollo-La réadaptation pour le développement	Sylvie Poisson
Development and Peace-Caritas Canada	Serge Langlois
Développement international Desjardins (DID)	Gerardo Almaguer
Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT)	Janet Longmore
Dignity Network Canada	Doug Kerr
Ecosystemstics	Myron Humeniuk
Education Global Health and Human Development Institute	Moustapha Faye
Effect:Hope	Kim Evans
Emergency Relief and Development Overseas (ERDO)	David Adcock

Enoch Adeyemi Foundation	Enoch Adewale Adeyemi
EPS Consulting Inc	Tunde Ogunje
Equality Fund	Jess Tomlin and Jessica Houssain
Equitas	Ian Hamilton
Ethiopiaid Canada	Kristin Douglas
Ethnobureaucratica	Iván G. Somlai
EWB Canada	Boris Martin
Expert Consulting on Governance	Elissar Sarrouh
Farm Radio International	Kevin Perkins
Federación Mexicana de Universitarias	Lucia Guzman De Malo
FMA - Frontier Markets Advisors	Christian Novak
Fondation Mères du Monde en Santé	Dr Jacques Corcos
Fondation Mondiale pour la Prosperite et l'Autonomie	Sandy Gershuny
Fonds Soldartié Sud	Louis Favreau
Food for the Hungry	Shawn Plummer
For The Love of Africa	Karen Schrey
Friends of Yemen	Kais Al-Iriani
Gatef organization	Atef Soliman
Global Aid Network (GAIN) Inc.	Ray Sawatsky
Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)	Janet Siddall and Pat Dolan
Green 13	Rita Bijons
Groupe d'économie solidaire du Québec (GESQ)	René Lachapelle
Growth Mosaic (Ghana)	Wayne Miranda
HealthBridge	Sian FitzGerald
Heart-Links Lazos de Corazón	Ruth Taylor
Hope and Healing International	Ed Epp
HOPE International Development Agency	Kim Savage
Horizons of Friendship	Patricia Rebolledo- Kloques

HPIC	Marcelle McPhaden
Human Concern International	Mahmuda Khan
Human Rights and Environment Improvement Centre	Mr. Ram Prasad Pangali
Humanité & Inclusion Canada	Jérôme Bobin
Humber College, Professor of Int. Development	William Sparks
iDE Canada	Stuart Taylor
IMPACT	Joanne Lebert
Impact Consulting Services Ltd	Denise Buchner
Independent Contractor	Isaac Olaleye Akanbi
India Canada Partners in Development Cooperation	Prem Kumar Marisa
Inter Pares	Rita Morbia & Kathryn Dingle
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)	Robin Montgomery
International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)	Mary Ann Torres
International Development and Relief Foundation	Mahmood Qasim
International Institute for Child Rights and Development	Vanessa Currie
International Institute for Sustainable Development	Richard Florizone
International Women's Rights Project	Susan Bazilli
IRIS Mundial	Julie Roegiers
Islamic Relief Canada	Zaid al Rawni
Jane Goodall Institute of Canada	Andria Teather
JMBC Conseil	Jean Martial Bonis Charancle
Journalists for Human Rights	Rachel Pulfer
Justice Education Society	Sonia Poulin
KAIROS	Jennifer Henry
Kawartha World Issues Centre	Julie Cosgrove
Keiskamma Canada Foundation	Annette Wentworth
Kenoli Foundation	Vera Radyo
KIDS Initiative Inc.	Cat Ross

La Fondation Paul Gerin-Lajoie	Marie-Pierre Nogarède
La Pêche Coalition for a Green New Deal	Ilse Turnsen
L'AMIE	Andre Jalbert
Le Pacte 241 Canada	Floris Renamy Rogoula
Les Amis de la Saint-Camille	Jean-Paul Cyr
LetsStopAIDS	Shamin Mohamed Jr.
Light Up The World	Christoph Schultz
Little Footprints Big Steps Child Protection Organization	Karen Wienberg
Lucky Iron Fish	Dr. Gavin Armstrong
Make Music Matter Inc.	Darcy Ataman
Manitoba Council for International Cooperation	Janice Hamilton
Médecins du Monde	Nadja Pollaert
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada	Rick Cober Bauman
Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba	Darryl Loewen
Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)	Dorothy Nyambi
Mer et Monde	Josée Lemire
Mercy Corps	Beth deHamel
Mission inclusion	Richard Veenstra
Mosaic.net International Inc.	Francoise Coupal
My Oral Village, Inc.	Brett Matthews
Network for international care and services (NICAs)	Koyes Ahmed
Nu-Vision Ministry Canada	Ray Dunn
OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants	Debbie Douglas
Oikocredit Canada	
ONE Canada	Stuart Hickox
One Child's Village: A Global Orphans Foundation	Todd Lorentz
One Health Network for the Global Governance of Infectious Diseases and AMR	Ronald Labonte
Ong ajs congo	Mpika Teddy Romel

Ontario College for Development Training	Dr. Marlyn Morris
Ontario Council for International Cooperation	Kimberly Gibbons
Operation Eyesight	Aly Bandali
Oxfam Canada	Kate Higgins
Oxfam-Québec	Denise Byrnes
Pacific Peoples' Partnership	April Ingham
ParlAmericas	Alisha Todd
Parliamentary Centre	Tom Cormier
Partenariat pour le développement des communautés	Baudouin Kutuka
Partners In Health Canada	Mark Brender
Partners Relief & Development Canada	Greg Toews
Patricia Erb & Associates	Patricia Erb / Cicely McWilliam
Plan International Canada	Dr. Tanjina Mirza
PlanNET Limited	Philip Cox
Presbyterian World Service & Development	Guy Smagghe
Primate's World Relief and Development Fund	Will Postma
Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala	
Proteknon Foundation for Innovation and Learning	Laura Lee
Public Service Alliance of Canada	Chris Aylward
Rainbow Faith and Freedom	Rev. Dr. Brent Hawkes, C.M.
Rainbow of Hope for Children Society	Charles Matt
Rainbow Railroad	Kimahli Powell
Rayjon Share Care of Sarnia Inc.	Heather Smith
Relations publiques sans frontières	Isabelle Thibeault
Results Canada	Chris Dendys
RISPED-ONG	KOUTHON Darius Charles Dénakpo
Rooftops Canada Foundation - Fondation Abri International	Barry Pinsky
Run For Life Inc.	John Carson
Salanga	Jakub Nemeč
Salasan Consulting Inc.	Renate Schoep

Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation	Jessica Wood
Save the Children	Bill Chambers
SeedChange	Martin Settle
SHARE Agriculture Foundation	Marg Frayne
Sihle-Sizwe Vineyard Foundation	Patricia Gumbo
SOCODEVI	Jean-Philippe Marcoux
Solidarité Sud	Renée Bourbonnais
Somali Canadian Education & Rural Development Organization	Bashir Ahmed
Sombrilla International Development Society	Peter Schalk
SOPAR-Bala Vikasa	Shobha Singareddy
SOS Children's Villages Canada	Thomas Bauer
Steelworkers Humanity Fund	Doug Olthuis
SUCO	Geneviève Giasson
Sumar + Associates Ltd.	Abbas Sumar
Tearfund Canada	Wayne Johnson
Terre Sans Frontières	Jean L. Fortin
TFO Canada	Steve Tipman
The Canada-International Scientific Exchange Program (CISEPO)	Shawna Novak
The Co-Laboratorio Project	Dr. June Francis and Dr. Kristina Henriksson
The Marquis Project	Zack Gross
The McLeod Group	
The Micah Centre	Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning
The United Church of Canada	Nora Sanders
The Wellspring Foundation for Education	Andy Harrington
Tous les Enfants de l'Autre Monde	Sylvain Fillion
T-Square Architecture Ltd	Timothy Turner-Davis
Ujeengo Global Community International	Sandy Onyalo
Universal Management Group	Marie-Hélène Adrien

UPA Développement international (UPA DI)	Hugo Beauregard- Langelier
Veterinarians without Borders / Vétérinaires sans frontières	Monique Charron
VIDEA	Lynn Thornton
War Child Canada	Dara McLeod
WaterAid Canada	Nicole Hurtubise
World Accord - International Development Agency	David Barth
World Renew	Ida Kaastra- Mutoigo
World University Service of Canada	Chris Eaton
World Vision Canada	Michael Messenger
Youth Challenge International	Bryan Cox
ZENDialogue	Natalie Zend