

Ottawa, February 5th, 2024

Canadian Leadership in a Deeply Insecure World

An Open Letter to Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The repercussions of climate-induced disasters, armed conflicts, the rise of authoritarianism and attacks against women's and children's rights have profoundly unsettled the bedrock of our global liberal democratic institutions. It has also led to the intensification of humanitarian emergencies, where needs are enormous and women and girls are bearing the brunt of them. This undermines the basic pillars of democracy, creates devastating humanitarian crises and reverses decades of progress on development.

The world is in turmoil and Canadians are looking on, worried about what it all means for our children and grandchildren. Canadians are also looking to you, Prime Minister, to champion our nation's values beyond our borders.

As Canada's leading international humanitarian and development agencies, we witness firsthand humanity's shortcomings. We also see the human capacity for cooperation and compassion.

We see the economic development and empowerment that Canadian international assistance programming abroad brings to local communities in the form of strengthened democratic institutions and human rights, resilient agriculture, inclusive trade and stronger health and education systems.

In this rapidly evolving world, foreign aid is crucial for global peace and security. Ongoing reverberations from the pandemic, rising hostilities among global superpowers and the devastating effects of climate change have created social conditions for authoritarian regimes and populist figures to roll back human rights and create global instability.

Some may be tempted to turn inwards and call for Canada to focus solely on its domestic challenges, as many Canadians are indeed in need of greater support. But in these times of compounding crises, the world is looking to Canada to boldly live up to our promise as a progressive leader. By increasing our investments in development programs and humanitarian aid, Canada can enhance its diplomatic reach, fostering a safer and more stable global environment that benefits all.

Respectfully, Prime Minister, our recent record on international assistance spending falls short of Canada's ambitions. It falls short of our commitment to being a reliable global partner for peace, economic opportunity and security.

As you prepare for Budget 2024 and continue to evaluate Canada's response to global challenges, we are unified in calling for strong investments in global security and prosperity by restoring the envelope for international development assistance.

The world is looking to Canada to live up to our promise as a leader, standing firm against forces that would roll back human and women's rights, climate action and democratic progress, and responding to the devastating humanitarian crises facing millions of people around the world.

Sincerely,

Canada's leading international cooperation agencies

Cc: Honorable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development
Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development
Katie Telford, Chief of Staff, Prime Minister's Office

