The coalition landscape

A mapping and analysis of current priorities, key issues, gaps and areas of overlap, and implications for Canadian international development and humanitarian coalitions

A Report Prepared for the

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

CCIC CCCI

CANADA'S COALITION TO END GLOBAL POVERTY
ENSEMBLE POUR ÉLIMINER LA PAUVRETÉ DANS LE MONDE

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) is a coalition of Canadian voluntary sector organizations working globally to achieve sustainable human development. CCIC seeks to end global poverty and to promote social justice and human dignity for all.

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List of Acronyms

General terms and acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CCIC	Canadian Council for International Co-operation
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development
DFAIT	(Former) Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
CIDA	(Former) Canadian International Development Agency

Participating Coalitions

UNDRIP	Ad-hoc coalition on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
ACF	Africa Canada Forum
APG	Americas Policy Group
APWG	Asia-Pacific Working Group
CASID	Canadian Association for the Study of International Development
CBAN	Canadian Biotechnology Action Network
C4D	Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development
CAC	Canadian Control Arms Coalition
CNCA	Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability
CAN-MNCH	Canadian Network for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
C4TF	Canadians for Tax Fairness
CAN	Climate Action Network of Canada
CPDSV	Coalition Pas de Démocratie Sans Voix
CQFD	Comité québécois femmes et développement
CF	Common Frontiers
FSPG	Food Security Policy Group
GESQ	Groupe d'Économie Solidaire du Québec
HC	Humanitarian Coalition
HRN	Humanitarian Response Network Canada
ICPNC	International Child Protection Network of Canada
ICLMG	International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group
MPH	Make Poverty History
Peacebuild	
PWYP	Publish What You Pay
TIRP	Trade and Investment Research Project
Voices-Voix	
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Canada
WRPG	Women's Rights Policy Group

Executive Summary

This study of 28 Canadian civil society organization (CSO) coalitions working on international development and humanitarian issues, was commissioned to help the Council and its members reflect and act on issue gaps, areas of overlap and current capacities in coalition work. It updates a similar study from 2011, identifying what has changed since then. The provisional findings were presented at a November 2014 conference, which convened 25 coalition leaders to discuss the report's implications for their work.

The report aims to:

- provide an overview of major Canadian CSO policy coalitions' operating structures, sources of revenue, current policy agendas, membership and upcoming priorities for 2015;
- analyze emerging issues of concern, as well as potential synergies and gaps in these coalitions' thematic work in relation to CCIC's *10 Point Agenda for Ending Global Injustice*.

This report is divided into four sections. The first section defines the concept of "coalition," identifies changes among coalitions relative to the 2011 study, and affirms the value added of coalition work.

One of the most striking realities revealed by this study, as in 2011, is the breadth of issues addressed by Canadian coalitions, and the diversity forms that coalitions take. To cover this diversity, the term "coalition" is used here to denote a number of like-minded organizations that have coalesced around a common focus to engage in a set of collaborative actions, primarily related to Canadian global policy issues, over a period of time. These different forms reflect a strategic choice about the role that members see the coalition playing in the policy-making process and the influence it is seeking to have.

Of the 28 coalitions profiled, there are 12 "new" coalitions, many of whom existed before 2011, but were not formally connected with CCIC's work. Other "new" ones were formed through a merger of existing networks. The remaining 16 have maintained a consistent mandate since 2011, although some have changed names. Five others from the 2011 study have either closed down or are less active.

In terms of value added, interviewees reaffirmed the 2011 findings, namely that collaboration increases impact; that many organizations speaking with a common message can have more impact, while also providing a "safety net" for doing so; that it affords an opportunity for networking, sharing information, and building collective knowledge and learning; that coalitions provide a community of support and practice; and that they build bridges to other communities.

In the second section, the report identifies cross-cutting issues that emerged from the study in terms of membership, governance, mandate, collaboration, funding, and priorities for 2015. Relative to 2011, coalition membership is growing and for various reasons: as groups look for a place to convene on policy and advocacy-related issues; seek solidarity and a platform for a collective voice; and match expanding coalition mandates with the appropriate set of players. That said, more members does not necessarily mean that these members are active. Participation ebbs and flows around particular opportunities, and organizations use coalitions to meet informational, programmatic, or policy and advocacy needs.

On governance, having a strong group of leaders (often with some sort of executive) to guide coalition work was a prevalent feature. Some coalitions have active Executives, while others have working groups that delve deeper on issues. More than two-thirds have a coordinator, seen as essential to their success, while others noted their lack of staff and *ad hoc* nature helped foster member buy-in and participation. Regardless, in general, members identify priority issues, while the leadership defines the approach.

In terms of mandate and focus, most coalitions are looking to scale up their policy and advocacy work, while others have shifted their emphasis towards more organizational learning. In contrast to 2011, more coalitions are engaging in public outreach and mobilization work, rather than leaving this to individual members to do. In terms of issues, there is an increasing focus on international trade and investment agreements. With the closure of The North-South Institute, coalitions are looking to build their research capacity and make more formal connections to academia. Some groups remain very responsive in nature to emerging opportunities, while others have a more methodical or predictable rhythm to their work.

In terms of collaboration, many coalitions are working with domestic coalitions, bridging the "domestic-international divide," and are incorporating the perspectives of those in the global south in their work, while others are working with other "northern" coalitions and networks outside of Canada. As expected, there is also a degree of coordination and collaboration between Canadian coalitions.

On funding, while a few groups witnessed substantial cuts, relative to 2011, the majority actually saw minor increases in funding. Coalition budgets range substantially, averaging $95,000 per year. Most coalitions collect member fees, with a few getting grants from foundations. In kind-contributions remain important. For some groups, the coalition format provides an attractive structure for potential funders.

Finally, looking ahead to 2015, coalitions are mindful of the looming Federal election as a pivotal time to have "their issues" raised (although too many active voices could drown out key messages). Interest in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) is there, but not prevalent.

The third section considers areas of overlap, gaps, and concerns in coalition work. Areas of potential common interest and collaboration include updating an earlier CCIC assessment of the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act; reframing the broader narrative around Canada's role in multilateral fora; researching the shrinking space for civil society; looking at the coherence (or lack thereof) between Canada's approach to development, trade and investment. In terms of gaps, few coalitions are working on financing for development; many coalitions are active, but keen to do more, on growth and the private sector; there is minimal focus on peace, security, and militarization; and finally more policy work could be done on humanitarian issues. In terms of overlap, 2015 could see too many organizations advocating for too many things ahead of the election, with key messages getting lost; various coalitions are looking at different aspects of working with the private sector; but, it is unclear whether different coalitions are actively providing space to reflect on where coalition mandates and work plans may overlap, even where organizational memberships overlap. As in 2011, few coalitions have funding diversification plans, despite uncertain funding. Finally, many coalitions are reviewing their membership criteria, to address new types of members and assess how to get members more engaged.

The fourth and final section considers the implications of this for CCIC. Coalitions see CCIC contributing to their work as a leader and adviser, maintaining a finger on the pulse of DFATD and feeding this into the work of coalitions, and providing a hub for the research of different coalitions; as an amplifier for outreach to other audiences, cross pollinating work between different constituencies; as a policy analyst, but also building the policy capacity of organizations; and, as a collaborator, hosting joint events with coalitions.

In conclusion, coalitions provide significant value to members by giving them a forum to look beyond their individual organizational experiences, in order to identify the broader context, share effective practices, or articulate policy and advocacy-driven responses. Just as coalitions respond to the experiences of their members, coalitions also have an opportunity to respond to the overlaps, gaps, and shared challenges identified in this study. The areas of overlap could be a practical way for coalitions to address capacity issues and build an even greater collective voice for impact. And CCIC has a role to play in all of this.

I. Introduction

This study of Canadian civil society organization (CSO) coalitions and policy agendas was commissioned by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) to help the Council and its members reflect and act on issue gaps, areas of overlap and current capacities in coalition work. CCIC conducted a similar study in 2011[1] as part of CCIC's visioning process, following significant structural changes to the Council's staff capacity in its Secretariat. The intent of this report is to provide an update on the nature of coalitions and their respective agendas since then. The provisional research and analysis in this study was presented at a November 2014 conference convening 25 coalition leaders to discuss the report's implications for international development and humanitarian coalitions in Canada.

This report was informed by interviews conducted with leaders from 28 different Canadian CSO coalitions addressing international development and humanitarian issues from a Canadian perspective. The report is not a detailed evaluation of Canadian CSO coalition work, but a snapshot of current Canadian CSO coalitions' capacity, priority areas, and self-identified strengths and weaknesses. The report aims to:

- provide an overview of major Canadian CSO policy coalitions' operating structures, sources of revenue, current policy agendas, membership and upcoming priorities for 2015;

- analyze emerging issues of concern, as well as potential synergies and gaps in these coalitions' thematic work in relation to the CCIC's *10 point Agenda for Ending Global Injustice*.

This report is divided into four sections. The first section sets the context by defining the concept of "coalition," categorizing the different types of coalitions profiled in this study. It identifies the changes in coalitions that participated in this current study relative to 2011, and looks at the value added of coalitions in Canada. In the second section, the report identifies some cross cutting issues that emerged from the interviews and that raise some issues for further reflection. The third section considers some of the overlaps, gaps, and concerns in the work of the various coalitions at an aggregate level. The fourth and final section considers the implications of all of this for CCIC.

As an editorial note, the CCIC's 2011 study provides a robust picture of the different types of coalitions, their structures, and the value of coalitions to organizational and individual members. This report does not intend to reiterate the coalition dynamics conveyed by the 2011 study. Indeed, much of what was discovered about the nature of coalitions in 2011 remains relevant today. Therefore, this report aims to highlight what has *changed* in the past three years of coalition work, and which dynamics remain prevalent in coalition work today. This analysis provides a sense of where coalitions are headed and what interventions may be needed to ensure that coalitions continue to be an effective policy and learning space for their members.

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[1] The 2011 Report can be found here:
http://www.ccic.ca/_files/en/working_groups/2011_03_CCIC_coalition_report%20_part_1.pdf

II. Context

A. Defining the Canadian coalition

Many of the general qualities identified in the 2011 study remain true today. The following section from the 2011 study highlights the diversity and common characteristics of Canadian coalitions:

> "One of the most striking realities revealed by this study is the breadth of issues addressed by Canadian coalitions, as well as the diversity of formats that coalitions take. There is no typical coalition. Even the term "coalition" does not accurately describe every case in point – there are loose networks, informal working groups, research groups, NGO-government reference groups, as well as more formal coalitions and groups still in their infancy. To cover the plethora of organizations and forums included in this report, the term "coalition" is used here to denote a number of like-minded organizations that have coalesced around a common focus to engage in a set of collaborative actions, primarily related to Canadian global policy issues, over an extended period of time.
>
> The groups profiled in this report might loosely be characterized in the following way:
>
> - Coalitions with an evolving menu of policies and positions on a range of issues, actively monitoring and responding to the government's policies and legislative initiatives, and reacting to these developments with civil society analysis and their own work-plan of research, education and advocacy;
> - Coalitions established primarily for learning and exchanging information on emerging issues and best practices among peers within civil society and government, and for mediating relations and positions between civil society and government officials – either with an advocacy angle or not;
> - Coalitions dedicated towards public mobilization, outreach and education at the grassroots level on specific issues, including running very targeted and time-specific campaigns on very specific issues;
> - Coalitions that are beginning to coalesce around a specific issue, but have yet to find a format or focus for their work.
>
> While coalitions generally stay within the parameters of one of the above profiles, the barriers between the characterizations are artificial, with coalitions slipping into different roles at different moments in time, depending on circumstance and need. Some coalitions may formally resist engaging in more direct forms of advocacy, preferring the closer exchanges with government that come from less combative relationships. Other coalitions play an "outside" game, which may contribute to advance the "inside" game pursued by other coalitions. Others may play both sides.
>
> In essence, the different formats reflect a strategic choice made by the group about the role that the coalition sees itself playing in the policy-making process and the influence it is seeking to have, whether formally or informally, on key decision-makers."

B. The rise, fall, endurance, and re-animation of coalitions

Twenty-eight (28) coalitions were included in this current study. In comparison to the 2011 study, several noteworthy changes have taken place.

There are 12 "new" coalitions on the roster for this year's study. While they were not included in the 2011 study, most of these coalitions existed before 2011 but were not formally connected with CCIC's work. Their inclusion in the current study is an indication of CCIC's recent participation with the coalition, or an interest to collaborate in the near future. One new coalition in which CCIC has not been actively engaged, but in which many CCIC members are involved, is the International Child Protection Network of Canada (ICPNC), which has focused on the issue of child protection since January 2012.

Other "new" coalitions in this category formed through a merger of prior coalitions or networks. One example of this would be the Canadian Network for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (CAN-MNCH), a newer coalition that shares many of the members of the former Canadian Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (CPMNCH) and the Policy Working Group on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PWGMNCH), two coalitions that were both nascent at the time of writing for the 2011 study. The former Sanitation and Water Action Network Canada (SWAN) disbanded, although Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Canada (WASH) replaces it with a nearly identical mandate and structure.

The remaining 16 coalitions in this current study have maintained a relatively consistent mandate over the past three years. Some have changed names, such as the Informal CSO Working Group on Women's Rights (WGWR), which has now evolved to become the Women's Rights Policy Group (WRPG), or the Policy Action Group for Emergency Response (PAGER) that is now the Humanitarian Response Network of Canada (HRN).

Other coalitions have closed down or have become inactive. The Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG), Canadian Global Campaign for Education (CGCE), Halifax Initiative (HI) have all phased out their activity or will do so in the very near future. The Working Group on Canadian Science and Technology is another coalition that has become relatively dormant. While it still maintains its formal network and may increase activity in the future, most of the members are active in Food Secure Canada and/or the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN). Peacebuild, while it has been dramatically reduced in terms of operational budget and the extent of its activities, remains operational, and is looking to re-evaluate its role in the civil society community.

The following table (Figure 1) compares the coalitions that were included in the 2011 study with those included in the current (2014) study. For those that are included in the current study, the table identifies which coalitions were consistent from the 2011 study, which coalitions changed their names since the 2011 study, and which coalitions were added. The coalitions that were part of the 2011 study, but were not included in the current study, are listed in the bottom category.

Figure 1: A list of participating coalitions

Coalitions included in the 2014 study	
Coalitions in both the 2011 and 2014 study:	**Coalitions that changed their names since 2011:**
• Africa Canada Forum • Americas Policy Group • Asia Pacific Working Group • Canadian Biotechnology Action Network • Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and development • Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability • Climate Action Network • Common Frontiers • Food Security Policy Group • International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group • Make Poverty History • Peacebuild • Trade and Investment Research Project • Voices-Voix	• Humanitarian Response Network (Formerly the Policy Action Group on Emergency Response [PAGER]) • Women's Rights Policy Group (Formerly the informal Working Group on Women's Rights)
	Coalitions added for the 2014 study:
	• Ad hoc coalition on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • Canadian Association for the Study of International Development • Canadian Control Arms Coalition • Canadian Network for Maternal Newborn and Child Health • Canadians for Tax Fairness • Coalition Pas de démocratie sans voix ! • Comité Québécois femmes et développement • Groupe d'économie sociale et solidaire • Humanitarian Coalition • International Child Protection Network of Canada • Publish What You Pay Canada • Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Canada

Coalitions not included in the 2014 study
• Canadian Global Campaign for Education • Canadian Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health • Food Secure Canada • Halifax Initiative • Policy Working Group on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health • Sanitation and Water Action Network Canada • The Global Treatment Access Group • Working Group on Canadian Science and Technology

C. The value added of Canadian coalitions

Interviews with coalition leaders identified some of the key contributions that Canadian coalitions make to the international development and humanitarian policy and advocacy landscape. The following section from the 2011 report identifies the benefits and advantages of coalition work in Canada, features that were affirmed by interviewees in this current study:

- *Collaboration increases impact.* Given the small size of the international development and policy community in Canada, being part of a coalition serves a pragmatic purpose. Much more can be accomplished by a handful of dedicated individuals, even with shoestring budgets, competing priorities, and limited time, when they choose to work together and combine some of these

resources to achieve common objectives. Working through coalitions, for example, organizations can put common concerns on the government's and opposition's radar, rapidly mobilize resources to bring partner concerns into the public realm, monitor the government's response, and generate their own collective response.

- *A stronger political impact and voice.* Many organizations speaking a common message with one voice have more political impact than many organizations each providing their own message. The weight and importance of a coalition comes in part from the number of organizational members who stand behind a coalition's recommendations. Coalitions become a voice for the sector on current and emerging issues.

- *Safety comes in numbers.* Since the current political context provides little space to voice opinions, organizations are reluctant to stand alone in their critique of government policy for fear of repercussions. (See "2.2" below.) These organizations find greater security when they stand behind a coalition that brings together a broader range of organizations and interests. One individual also noted that coalitions can act as a kind of "safety net" for partners working on the ground.

- *Networking and a sense of community.* Program and policy work can be isolating. Coalitions allow individuals from a range of different organizations working on the same issues to connect with their peers. It also allows groups to expand their contacts beyond their own network of associates to those of their peers, both North and South.

- *Intelligence and information exchange.* Intelligence and information is a valuable commodity, and good information, analysis and intelligence can be hard to come by. A coalition of groups allows one organization to tap into a much deeper pool of information, perspectives and intelligence sourced from a network of groups with different partners and official contacts. Where there are ties to international networks, coalitions can also help frame members' understanding of the Canadian government's perspectives and the work of the coalition within a broader international context – a context that includes both international policy agendas and the perspectives of international social movements.

- *Building collective knowledge and learning on an issue*. Another astounding feature of many of the coalitions profiled here is how rich the collective experience and expertise is among the individuals and organizations involved. As one individual put it, for its members, coalitions become a "hub for learning" and content development on a range of sector specific issues related to, for example, anti-terrorism initiatives, corporate accountability, education, food security, health, and the international financial system and its institutions. This learning is essential given the often technical nature of some of the issues many coalitions are addressing. Two others described coalitions as "catalysts" that stimulate discussion and learning on current issues of shared concern. In many cases, this knowledge sharing is not just internal, but external. Many coalitions have also become a credible and authoritative reference point for government officials, parliamentarians, media and other networks and coalitions on these issues.

- *Creating a community of practice*. Some coalitions, for example on climate change and development, humanitarian assistance, maternal, newborn and child health, and peace, are set up for technical cooperation, training and exchange of best practices among peer organizations. These fora allow for a very practical technical and operational learning experience between individuals who are actively engaged in implementing international development programmes.

As one participant in this study noted, it helps develop a common technical language and standards among peer groups, it builds individual member strength, and it generates broader confidence within the system.

- *Building bridges.* Coalitions can also provide a space for building bridges between different communities working on different issues, but with a shared desire to tackle an issue more comprehensively by integrating their approaches --for example, on climate change and development or on health, nutrition and sanitation.

In addition to these benefits, interviewees in the current study identified their coalition's ability to mobilize the public on key issues. As noted later on (see section II.C.2 *Educating and mobilizing the public: a prevalent agenda item*), providing sound research, an appropriate context, and tangible steps of action for Canadian citizens appears to be a growing feature of coalitions in Canada.

Interviewees also highlighted the value of *Political Impact and Voice* in a different way. In addition to collaborating with other organizations to present a unified voice to the government on specific issues, coalitions are frequently a space that provides *access* to government in a context were opportunities are increasingly limited. Several interviewees noted that their members were pushing for more opportunities to do policy and advocacy under the credible banner of a coalition.

III. Summary of report findings – shared cross-cutting themes, challenges, and concerns

The following findings are thematic issues that arose through interviewing coalition leaders and examining updated information for the 28 different coalitions. These findings are organized based on issues pertaining to Membership, Governance, Mandate, Collaboration with other groups, Funding, and Priorities for 2015.

A. Membership

1. Coalition membership is growing

Overall and on average, membership levels in coalitions are on the rise. Based on 14[2] of the existing coalitions that participated in the 2011 study, overall membership in coalitions is up 11% going from 384 to 425 members[3]. Also, these coalitions experienced on average a 12% increase in membership, indicating that this is not simply one or two coalitions growing drastically but a general increase across the board. In fact, only three coalitions saw a decrease in membership and an additional three coalitions saw no change in their membership numbers over the past three years.

Figure 2 illustrates the change in membership levels, where green indicates an increase in membership and red represents a decrease in membership from the 2011 levels.

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[2] Note that Voices-Voix and the WRPG were not included in this calculation. While they did participate in the 2011 study, these coalitions function differently from many other coalitions in that the groups consists of a few core staff or leaders and have a broad public base of supporters whose number is difficult to ascertain.
[3] Note that these do NOT represent unique members: many coalitions have an overlap of member organizations.

Figure 2: Membership changes since 2011 study
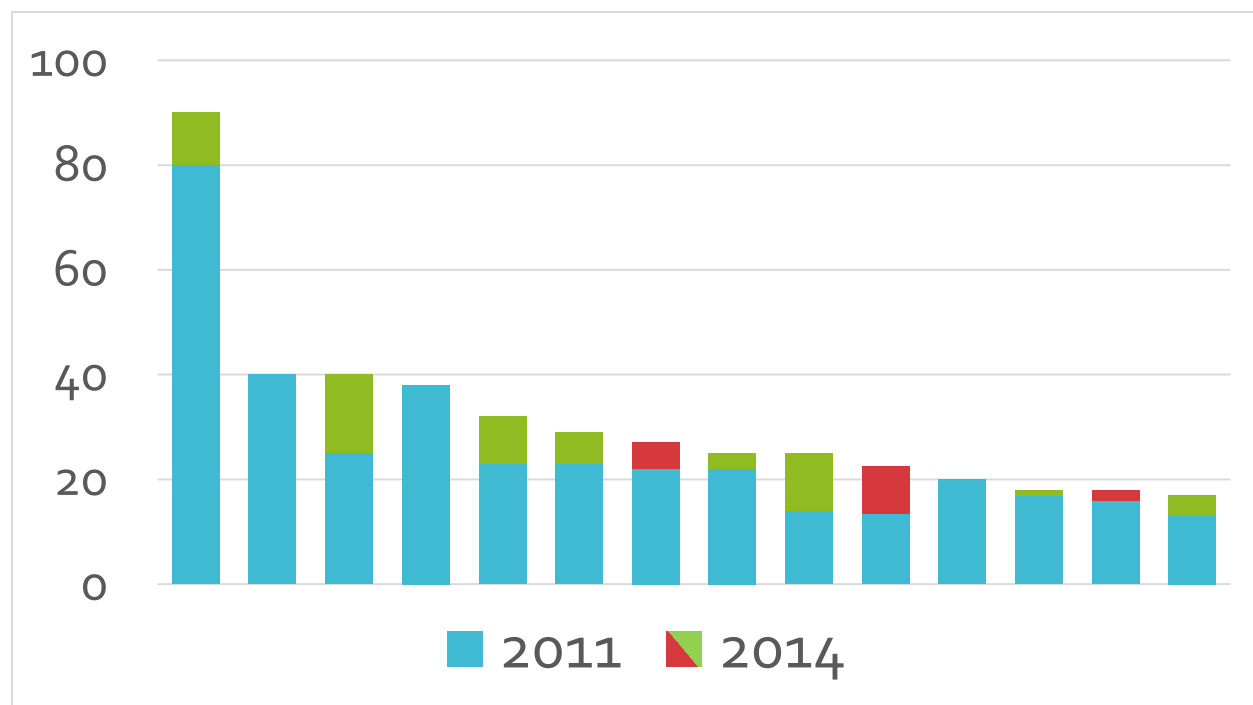
2. Why are membership levels changing? Policy space, protection, and an open mandate

In looking at these changing rates of coalition membership, interviewees provided several reasons to explain the growth of their coalition:

2.1 Looking for policy space

As noted above, coalitions can be a valuable place for organizations to convene on policy and advocacy-related issues. Several interviewees suggested that coalitions are taking on the role of policy development in a context where the sector is seeing shrinking organizational capacity to take on public policy and advocacy roles. The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) and Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D) can be identified as two examples where their increasing membership was attributed to individual organizations that lacked capacity, but maintained interest in policy-related work. This includes organizations – and in particular, smaller organizations – that saw coalitions as an opportunity for "internal learning" on policy issues.

A significant observation from coalition leaders was that organizational representatives participating in coalitions are also changing. Coalitions are seeing far more "program" staff instead of "policy" staff sitting at the table, especially when organizational representatives are coming from smaller organizations. Many coalition leaders concluded that this was a reflection of changing dynamics within organizations that, due to reduced funding, were being forced to consolidate policy roles into program management positions. It was thought that coalitions were expected to take on this policy role where organizational capacity no longer existed.

2.2 "The big chill" and finding strength in numbers

Other coalitions noted that new members came to the coalition looking for solidarity and a platform for a collective voice. The "big chill" – a climate of trepidation in the current context about doing policy and advocacy work – has not only threatened funding opportunities for organizations, but also challenged the very existence of some CSOs. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) audits and reporting requirements, particularly around political activity and anti-terrorism legislation, have challenged the primary practices and even charitable status of some organizations. The coalition context provides a degree of protection for individual members and organizations by preventing them from being singled out, a feature found attractive for some new members.

2.3 Shifting to a broader mandate and broader membership has allowed coalitions to reach out to non-traditional members

Several coalitions attributed their increased membership to a change in mandate or to a broader set of requirements for membership. For example, WASH has intentionally sought out organizations from outside the traditional development organizations, bringing together groups such as academics, medical professionals, and engineers. Their focus has been to make the coalition a space for shared learning for *all* who are interested in water, sanitation, and health. Similarly, CAN-MNCH's mandate to focus on the most vulnerable women and children has led them to include a wide range of actors who can offer new perspectives to address challenging development issues. The Humanitarian Response Network (formerly PAGER), which shifted from a strong policy focus to a learning community, has increased its membership as well. This broader mandate has brought in some of the smaller organizations that are beginning to do more humanitarian work and are interested in learning from those who have significant experience in this area. Some coalitions, like the Regional Working Groups on the America, Africa and Asia, have also seen their membership increase as they explore associate memberships of either organizations or individuals.

3. Memberships increasing, but are members more engaged?

The issue-driven ebb and flow of in-kind contributions and committing staff time

When looking at membership participation, most interviewees indicated there was significant variance in member participation, ranging from members who were "very active" to "barely there." Quite often the level of engagement from individual members was *topical* or *issue-driven*: if the member took particular interest in an issue or one of the coalition's initiatives, or had appropriate resources or networks that could contribute to the success of the coalition's goals, they would be more actively engaged.

While this is perhaps not very surprising, the matter of engagement is closely connected to the perceived value of the coalition to individual members. Those who were more interested in information gathering could participate simply by subscribing to a listserv or joining conference calls, while others may be more interested in investing time to directly shape the programs or products of the coalition, such as research initiatives or events. One interviewee even noted a spectrum of participation, including: lurkers (on the listserv only), attenders (of events), signers (of letters), participators (in events), and organizers.

Regardless of what "category" a member may fit into, interviewees noted that just because a member is less engaged at a particular time does not mean it will stay that way. Some may be quiet or even dormant at some points, but it is possible they might increase their activity when an issue of interest comes up.

B. Governance

1. Structural significance: Boards, Executives, and Steering Committees

Having a strong group of leaders to guide the work of coalitions was a prevalent dynamic. Eighty-two percent (or 23/28) of the coalitions surveyed have some form of a Board of Directors, Executive Committee, or a Steering Committee in place. These bodies provide a consistent voice when specific priorities may shift from year to year, or even within a year, particularly for coalitions that are advocacy-driven and more responsive in nature. A handful of coalitions have both an Executive body (such as a Board of Directors or Executive Committee) *and* a Steering Committee. In these cases, responsibilities are divided where the Executive typically provides oversight for the operational procedures for the coalition, such as managing finances, staff time, and occasionally weighing in on the coalition's direction in a context such as an annual meeting, while Steering Committees tend to have a more hands-on role with the coalition's work plan.

Regardless of whether a coalition has a Board, Executive, or Steering Committee, these governing bodies are almost always a reflection of the most dedicated members of the coalition. Some members in these leadership groups have been consistent for years, allowing a strong sense of "coalition memory," noted as an asset in recalling past positions, a more robust context for emerging issues, and clarity when discerning future directions for the coalition. Finally, interviewees noted that the governance structures themselves have remained relatively unchanged over the past several years, and were generally confident that the structure would continue to serve the needs of the coalition.

2. The "Executive Only" approach

Several coalitions (such as Canadian Control Arms Coalition [CAC], Voices, Trade and Investment Research Project (TIRP), and Canadians for Tax Fairness [C4TF]) operate with a small Executive, Board, or Steering Committee that identifies the priorities and manages the entirety of the work plan. These groups have a significant research component to their work, which is completed by the executive team or a small number of staff or short-term consultants. These coalitions then reach out to a broader network of supporters to share valuable information and common messaging during opportunities of influence. Interviewees from coalitions with these structures noted that having a small executive allowed them to be responsive, acting quickly when new opportunities came up.

3. Sub-committees and working groups have potential for in-depth analysis, but risk creating silos

Many groups maintain a relatively broad mandate, but then "drill down" on specific topics of interest. These initiatives are often led by a subset of members, in the form of an ad-hoc working group or sub-committee. Creating these groups allows members to work on specific areas of interest that may appeal to individual organizations, or opportunities where members can make a unique contribution to the work of the coalition based on their own assets, such as media or government relations and political strategy, event coordinating skills, or research capacity. Many sub-groups are project specific and time bound, while others are thematic standing committees (such as media and communications, or event coordination), which provided a helpful go-to point for operational issues within the coalition.

There is typically some tension when coalitions devote attention to a "niche" component of the coalition's broader mandate. On the one hand, sub committees within coalitions increase the group's potential to address the needs of coalition members, such as creating in-depth analysis of an issue of interest (for

example, a research initiative or convening a conference or learning event). However, interviewees noted that doing so may risk losing the interest of other coalition members, or even worse, risk overlooking the needs of the broader coalition. Furthermore, this type of work runs the risk of creating silos within coalitions, where members are too focused on specific areas and unaware of the other work of the coalition. Finally, having individuals or organizations participate in more than one sub-committee or working group can lead to individual burn out or a burden on the organization's resources (time, financial contributions, etc.). Often referred to as a "balancing act," coalition leaders note the need to remain relevant to their respective members, responding to this need by ensuring that activities reflect the broad mandate of the coalition, or at least alternate between "niche" components that could engage other members and the "mainstream" agenda.

4. "Is it in the job description?" Taking on the role of coordinator

As the previous point demonstrated, coalitions need coordination, and coordination takes time. In fact, 68% (19/28) of the coalitions surveyed have paid staff, ranging from part-time coordinators to a small staff of two or three people. The remaining coalitions find their leadership in member organizations that place a high priority on coalition (and policy) work (such as Inter Pares, Oxfam, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and AQOCI). Unsurprisingly, interviewees identified this as a crucial factor in the success of a coalition, identifying the role as "a conduit, a common thread that keeps the network together."

5. Informal vs. Formal

Several coalitions said it was their lack of staff and their *ad hoc* nature that encouraged buy-in and participation from members, and allowed them to function well. The *ad hoc* working group on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is an excellent example of this, particularly with a membership comprised largely of regional first nations groups and advocates for indigenous freedoms. In this example, it was noted that the informal structure allowed the group to respond naturally and promptly to emerging issues by reaching out to specific members who were uniquely positioned to address certain issues (for example, based on their geographical location, connections with media, or networks of legal professionals). The effectiveness of this approach was strengthened in instances where members were very familiar with one another (i.e. trusting) and knew where each other's strengths could contribute to the group's work.

Others identified the challenges of working through informal networks. While "horizontal leadership" may be an attractive concept, some coalition leaders noted that having designated point-people with specific coordinating roles can help the group achieve its goals and ensure that members take greater ownership of the coalition.

6. Coalition priorities: members identify issues, leadership defines approach

The decision-making nature of governance structures has direct implications for identifying and pursuing coalition priorities. Generally speaking, most coalitions identify overarching priority issues when the broad membership is convened, such as at annual meetings or through regular conference calls. These venues give members opportunities for input.

The proverbial baton is then typically passed on to coalition leadership, including staff, the steering committee, or sub-committees, to follow up on these identified priorities by defining an appropriate work plan in order to put tangible "next steps" on big ideas or concepts. These processes, particularly when sub-committees are involved, allow the broader membership to engage if and where they are interested.

C. Mandate and Focus

While governance structures have remained relatively unchanged for coalitions, interviewees have noted shifts in the priorities of their coalition.

1. Policy and advocacy: more, or less?

As noted earlier, coalitions commonly provide space for joint policy research and advocacy initiatives for members. Nearly all coalitions have some component of policy or advocacy work, whether through public mobilization campaigns or directly engaging policy makers such as members of parliament (MPs), ministers, or bureaucrats.

While the majority of coalitions (roughly two out of three respondents) indicated that they would maintain their level of policy and advocacy work, several coalitions explicitly stated that they are looking to increase this aspect of their coalition's work. This change was noted as a member-driven change, where organizations are looking for a platform for policy and advocacy work and hoping to find that space within coalition work. Other coalitions, such as the Africa Canada Forum (ACF) or CBAN, are considering scaling up their policy and advocacy work, depending on the outcomes and findings of significant research initiatives that are currently in-progress. In other cases, emphasizing or maintaining the level of policy work was a feature highlighted by new coalition members looking to either build their organizational knowledge on policy issues, or work together with other organizations to create a collective voice on policy issues.

Yet not all coalitions are increasing advocacy efforts. Some coalitions have shifted their emphasis towards doing more organizational learning instead of policy-related advocacy. This is perhaps most dramatically represented in HRN (formerly PAGER). Other coalitions have reduced advocacy and public mobilization efforts in favor of this shift towards training and capacity building of members. In reflecting on cases where outward policy and advocacy efforts have declined, interviewees noted the "space" for policy dialogue with policy makers and policy-making bodies has been in steady decline over the past several years.

2. Educating and mobilizing the public: a prevalent agenda item

The 2011 report noted that engaging the Canadian public through education, and efforts to mobilize them to take action, was not a big priority area for coalitions. This task was generally left to coalition members to engage their own supporters on key advocacy issues. Two notable exceptions were the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG) and Make Poverty History (MPH).These two coalitions maintain a strong public engagement component to their work today, but they are now joined by several other coalitions. WRPG has essentially put its regular operations on hold because of the "Up for Debate" campaign, a campaign initiated by the WRPG to end violence against women, improve women's economic equality, and support women in leadership. This campaign has gained incredible momentum, especially with domestic coalitions (see *Collaboration with other groups* below). C4TF's core mandate is to build a national campaign to promote fair taxation. Common Frontiers and UNDRIP frequently look to engage Canadians and civil society groups, especially those working on indigenous issues. CNCA launched its "Open for Justice" campaign to create public support for an extractive-sector Ombudsman to investigate complaints against Canadian mining companies. Other coalitions such as TIRP, Voices, WASH, and the Humanitarian Coalition have increased their respective focus on public education.

While these and other coalitions have initiated advocacy campaigns in the past, it is difficult to determine quantifiably if public mobilization has increased. What *has* seemed to change is that instead of leaving much of the work to individual members, coalitions are assuming a much more hands-on approach to inform the public and give citizens the tools to engage policy makers.

3. An increasing focus on trade and investment issues

In examining the broad spectrum of coalition mandates, a notable trend is the increasing focus on international trade and investment agreements. Given the 2012 merger between the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade into the consolidated Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), several coalitions have taken it upon themselves to explore how these cross-cutting themes impact development objectives and outcomes. Some coalitions, such as Common Frontiers and TIRP, have focused on these dynamics of international relations for years (or in the case of Common Frontiers, two decades). Other coalitions have either initiated or renewed this as a topic of research this past year. CCIC's regional working groups (Americas Policy Group [APG], Africa Canada Forum [ACF], and Asia-Pacific Working Group [APWG]) initiated a coordinated research project exploring geographical implications of international investment strategies. Food Security Policy Group (FSPG) has been following and participating in the development of the Responsible Agricultural Investment principles led by the International Committee on Food Security, although it is perhaps not as engaged around trade and investment issues as it once was. MPH has taken a broader approach to investment and trade issues, advocating for principles that allow developing countries to choose their own policies and priorities (what one might call "policy space").

4. Addressing the Research Void

With the closure of the North-South Institute and the imminent closure of the Halifax Initiative, civil-society-driven research will take a big hit. The question of who will take on this significant role is an important point to consider, and one that has direct connections to research initiatives led by coalitions.

Some coalitions noted that they have brought on consultants for research projects, paying for such services out of the coalition's operational funds or project-specific grants received by donors (including the International Development Research Council (IDRC)). Others have staff that have either added this component to their list of responsibilities, or coalitions have brought on new staff dedicated to research, typically on a part-time basis.

It is also worth reflecting once again on how coalition memberships have grown and changed over the past three years. As noted earlier, some of the growth in coalitions is related to building networks with other sectors, including academia. Indeed, many coalitions included in this study have strong links to academics and universities within their membership, including (but not exclusively): Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID, whose core mandate is to strengthen international development study); C4TF and CCIC's regional working groups (which have all organized events and symposiums that included academics); ICLMG (examining issues of academic freedom); TIRP (which has engaged academics for its research); Groupe d'economie solidaire du Québec (GESQ) (whose flagship program is an international university partnership with Haiti); and WASH, Climate Action Network of Canada (CAN), WRPG, and CAN-MNCH (whose membership includes an extensive network of universities). While not all of these coalitions have necessarily *added* academic connections to their memberships, these networks may prove to be a valuable factor when they want to produce and promote civil-society-driven research in the future.

5. Responsive vs. Planned

Some groups remain very responsive in nature (such as the UNDRIP or the Humanitarian Coalition [HC]). In coalitions like this, the broad network plays an important role as a reference group to bring in expertise and react to changing circumstances in a timely fashion. Some groups, like the International Child Protection Network of Canada (ICPNC), a relatively junior coalition, have been able to respond quickly to political opportunities and have actively raised and maintained the profile of child protection issues on the government agenda, in part due to the Network's highly engaged and active membership.

Other coalitions have a more methodical or predictable rhythm to their work. Work plans highlight activities such as research initiatives or campaigns that require longer-term planning. This is typically coordinated by a few key members, a sub-committee or sub-group, or in some cases, external consultants. Many coalitions identify these work plans at annual face-to-face meetings and delegate responsibility, with regular check-ins with the broader membership.

D. Collaboration with other groups

1. Working with domestic coalitions

Several coalitions have noted that their membership has broadened to include more domestic organizations and members. In these cases, interviewees noted that this is a practical way to bridge the "domestic-international divide," a challenge experienced by many international development organizations and networks seeking to make global development issues known, relevant, and approachable to average Canadians. Some examples include the UNDRIP, which has focused on connecting indigenous rights issues such as free, prior, and informed consent ("FPIC") happening in the Canadian context to similar issues faced by indigenous peoples around the world. The WRPG, in its launch of the "Up for Debate" campaign, is looking to raise awareness of women's rights and equality issues in Canada, while making the link to international contexts where the same issues are faced by women around the world. Common Frontiers is another example where the coalition's experience in advocacy and research on the correlation between investment and human rights issues in Latin America, is now being shared with Canadian communities who are facing similar issues around big investment strategies and corporate activity.

These coalitions, among others, have promoted a sense of solidarity amongst domestic and internationally-focused civil society groups. Interviewees described this as breaking down the artificial barriers between international and domestic issues, noting that some of the core issues that challenge communities in Canada are the same ones affecting communities around the world.

2. Southern voices

Continuing the theme of coalitions as a space for convening diverse perspectives, all interviewees noted the value of incorporating the perspectives of those in the global south (or "developing countries"). Many suggested that their coalitions bring in these southern perspectives by proxy: that is, coalition members have strong connections with southern partners, and those relationships factor into the regular work and overarching priorities of their coalition. This is particularly prominent in the cases where program staff are the organizational representatives in coalitions (see *Looking for policy space* above).

Others are engaging southern voices more directly by including partners on conference calls, or even bringing southern partners to Canada for conferences and public events and political meetings. Some

coalitions have southern organizations as members of coalition, so they have a more direct role in sharing information and the coalition decision-making process.

3. Northern collaboration

Approximately one out of every four coalitions indicated that they are also working with other "northern" coalitions and networks outside of Canada. These networks were described as constructive relationships with traditional "donor" countries (such as the US, UK, and other European countries), and contributed to coalition efforts by highlighting comparable efforts in similar countries. Some examples include Publish What You Pay Canada (PWYP), which is collaborating with other PWYP networks (particularly in Europe) and financial transparency initiatives, in order to ensure they share not only a common advocacy agenda, but also common messaging. Other networks, such as Voices-Voix and ICLMG connect with civil liberties groups in other northern countries to inform their analysis and recommendations on similar issues here in Canada. Such collaboration also exists in coalitions such as CCAC, TIRP, and WASH.

4. Inter-Coalition collaboration: does it happen naturally, or is it intentional?

As expected, there is also a degree of coordination and collaboration between Canadian coalitions. This collaboration often takes the form of occasional shared-events, or joint public campaigns on issues that fall under the broad mandate of several coalitions. For example, the aforementioned "Up for Debate" campaign initiated by the WRPG also includes participation from MPH. In another example, there was dialogue between CNCA, C4TF, and PWYP to discuss tax justice issues related to the Canadian extractive sector. The ICPNC and CAN-MNCH have jointly aligned messaging around investments in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics as a tool for monitoring progress in MNCH and a tool for protecting children from abuse and exploitation.

Most prominently, when interviewees were asked about working with coalitions they referred to the existing overlap of organizational members. In some cases, coalitions themselves were members of other coalitions. This was most common when coalitions had paid staff that could sit on committees, working groups, or just be members of other coalitions that had overlapping interests and mandates. There was a general assumption that individual members would be the ones to identify relevant cross-cutting themes, areas of mandate overlap, or opportunities to collaborate with other coalitions and networks.

E. Funding

All coalitions require some form of contribution from its members to achieve the coalition's objectives. Interviewees described their current experiences with securing funding for their coalition, and what funding horizons their groups may be anticipating.

1. Drastic funding cuts for some, but generally seeing incremental increases

Looking specifically at the 14[4]coalitions included in the 2011 study that provided updated information for this 2014 study, overall funding for coalition work has dropped from roughly $2.02M to just $1.05M. While this is a drop of 52% overall, some coalitions were hit harder than others. Peacebuild represented the most significant reduction, going from $820,000 in 2011 to less than $20,000 today. MPH and CAN also

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[4] Note that C4D and the WRPG were not included in this calculation because both coalitions had zero operating budget in both 2011 and 2014.

experienced significant cuts over the same period of time, going from $250,000 to $20,000 and $190,000 to $100,000, respectively.

While these cuts represent the most significant decreases in coalition funding, they do not represent the whole picture. In fact, looking at the 11 other coalitions from which we have 2011 data, these coalitions actually saw on average an *increase* of 15% in funding. While these coalitions represent a smaller portion of the comprehensive fiscal picture for coalition work, these incremental increases are noteworthy.

Figure 3 illustrates the change in coalition funding levels, where green indicates an increase in funding and red represents a decrease in funding from the 2011 levels.

Figure 3: Coalition funding, 2011 and 2014
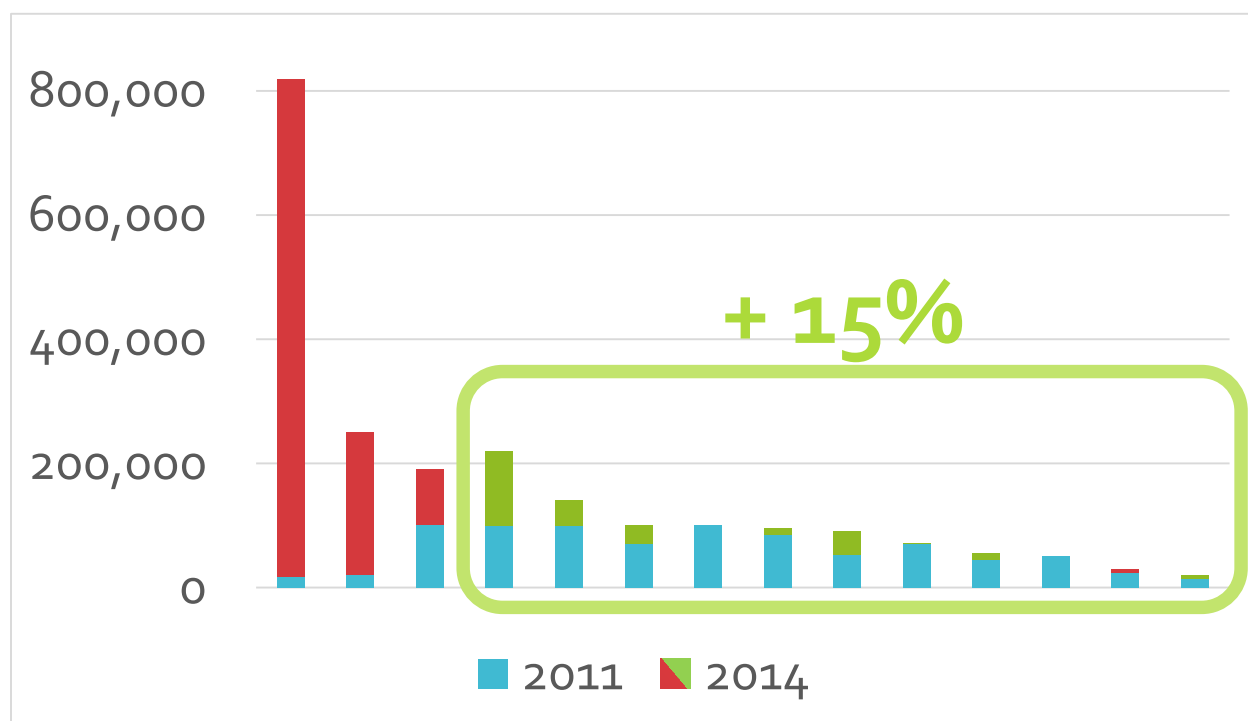
2. Just how much does it cost to run a coalition?

Given the diversity of coalitions, particularly with respect to staff levels and leadership structure, it is perhaps extraneous to suggest what the operational costs would be for a "normal" coalition. Of the 28 coalitions surveyed this year, four coalitions operated on zero budget (with operational costs being covered by members' in-kind contributions) and another two coalitions reported annual costs of $3,000 or less. The remaining 20 coalitions had budgets between $20,000 and $300,000, with an average of about $95,000 per year. These budgets were primarily allocated to staff salaries (ranging from one part-time staff to upwards of three staff), event-related costs, or funding for research initiatives. It is worth noting once again that in-kind contributions from members, such as staff time and organizational resources, make up a significant percentage of resources available to coalitions. These in-kind contributions are not factored into annual operating budgets.

3. Funding sources: member-driven, but contemplating diversification

Seventy-nine percent (22/28) of coalitions surveyed indicated that they receive some funding from membership fees or member contributions. These funds were occasionally supplemented by grants (with IDRC funding mentioned by seven different coalitions) or foundation funding (mentioned four times). As noted earlier, in-kind contributions are also prevalent, with some organizational members providing institutional support such as meeting space, hosting events, or teleconference infrastructure.

In terms of member-funding contributions, some coalitions noted that they were receiving smaller donation amounts, but more members were contributing. Several interviewees noted that having members contribute funding was one way of encouraging members/organizations to make a stronger investment of time in the work of the coalition.

Generally speaking, most respondents were confident that their existing funding methods would remain in place for the near future. Several interviewees suggested that the ongoing funding challenges faced by development organizations could pose a threat to the financial future of coalition work. As such, they were considering alternative sources of funding, such as foundations. Two coalitions had tried getting foundation funding in the past, but suggested that their work on human rights, democratic voice, and civil liberties was generally not attractive to foundations. Others cited their non-charitable status as a barrier to receiving this kind of funding. Finally, a handful of coalitions are looking to create opportunities for individual donations, such as a donation button on their website, but were expecting those contributions to be marginal.

4. Collaboration also has potential for securing organizational funding

As coalitions convene various organizations around thematic areas of work, these networks can provide a centralized "access point" for donors looking to allocate money to a particular theme. Coalitions such as the Humanitarian Coalition or CAN-MNCH noted their ability to provide donors (such as the government) with clarity and a strategy for spending aid commitments. But both coalitions are, perhaps, quite uniquely placed, because of the nature of their relationship with the government and their coalition mandates.

F. Looking to 2015

In reflecting on their coalition's current mandate, interviewees identified the emerging priorities for their coalition in the coming year. While each coalition naturally has priorities specific to its mandate and the needs of its members, two themes emerged:

1. The looming election is a common consideration

With the prevalence of policy and advocacy agendas in coalition work, it is no surprise that several coalitions are looking to the coming election in 2015 as a pivotal time to have "their issues" raised during the election. This opportunity is commonly taking the form of public campaigns (such as the "Up for Debate" campaign from the WRPG and Comité Québécois Femmes et Développement (CQFD), or the "Open for Justice" campaign by CNCA) or broader objectives geared towards raising the profile of the coalition's work during this time (such as Voices-Voix looking to increase discourse on attacks on democracy, MPH's push to increase voter turnout, or C4TF's goal to make tax issues a big focus for the election).

Others noted a more subtle approach to working their agenda into the election timeline. Those that focus more on "insider advocacy" (or "soft diplomacy") by relying on personal relationships with policy-makers, suggested that they hope to continue identifying the priorities of their coalition as parties and campaign strategists define their messaging for the election.

2. SDGs are there, but not prevalent

Just a handful of coalitions noted that they were closely watching the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process unfold for the coming year. In particular, MPH, UNDRIP, CQFD, GESQ, ICPNC and FSPG have been following this "post-2015" process and keeping track of the prevalence of poverty, indigenous rights, women's rights, economic inclusion, child protection and food security objectives, respectively within these processes. Apart from the occasional publication, it appears that activity around the SDGs has been primarily an observational role, which is perhaps a reflection of the limited opportunities that groups may feel remain for providing substantive input into this process, their lack of familiarity with the UN system and how to influence it, or their perception of the challenges of swaying the government on already well-established plans and positions for 2015.

IV. Overlap, Gaps, and Concerns

After conducting interviews with coalition leaders, several areas of overlap, gaps, and concerns emerged that apply to the broader work of coalitions in Canada.

A. Thematic Overlap

1. The ODA Accountability Act: an opportunity for a new "report card"?

The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (or the ODAAA) is a piece of Canadian legislation that requires that Canada's ODA "may be provided only if the competent Minister is of the opinion that it"[5] meets all three of the following criteria: contribute to poverty reduction; take into account the perspectives of the poor; and be consistent with international human rights standards.

With nearly all coalitions addressing at least one of these criteria, perhaps there is an opportunity to evaluate Canada's effectiveness in adhering to this piece of legislation. In 2010, a report entitled "A Time to Act"[6] was co-authored by CCIC, Amnesty International, The North-South Institute, Rights & Democracy, and the University of Ottawa's School of International Development and Global Studies, evaluating the impact of the first year that this legislation was in effect. Since then, there has been further clarification in terms of how to interpret the Act with the public disclosure in 2014 of two (of three) guidance notes on the second and third criteria of the Act. With two of five organizations that authored "A Time to Act" now closed, and CCIC's capacity drastically reduced, could coalitions come together and play a role in updating this research and producing another shadow report as the Act passes its seventh anniversary?

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[5] Official Development Assistance Accountability Act (S.C. 2008, c. 17), para 4. (1). Retrieved from: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.8/index.html
[6] http://www.ccic.ca/_files/en/what_we_do/002_aid_2010_05_a_time_to_act_e.pdf

2. Canada's role at the UN and other multilateral bodies

In the mandate of many coalitions that participated in this study, there is a common critique emerging with regards to Canada's multilateral priorities and engagement with bodies such as the United Nations. Several coalitions have focused on the harmful effects of Canada's trade liberalization agenda through free trade agreements and foreign direct investment (TIRP, CCIC's regional working groups, C4TF, CNCA, PWYP). Others have examined Canada's deteriorating role at the UN and multilateral processes (UNDRIP, C4D, CNCA, CCAC, FSPG, and Peacebuild). Perhaps this common critique can be lifted from the work of individual coalitions and become part of a broader narrative on Canada's role in the multilateral arena.

3. The Enabling Environment for civil society

Several coalitions are examining the shrinking space for civil society in countries. Some are looking at democratic rights (such as Voices and ICLMG). Others are examining issues pertinent to indigenous populations and marginalized groups (UNDRIP, CNCA, APG, ICLMG), or the rights and conditions for women to participate (WRPG, MPH, and CQFD). Many of these groups have looked at these "Enabling Environment" issues in developing countries, or even here in Canada. In the latter case, in July 2015, Canada will be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Committee for its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, representing an opportunity to feed into the process. Canada hasn't appeared for review since 2006, and the review will conclude with an outcome document (a sort of "judgment") including recommendations to be implemented before the next review. Canada has already submitted its own report on how it believes it has fulfilled its obligations. Again, is there a common narrative that can be brought forward?

4. International agreements and local and national decision-making

As noted, a number of coalitions have increased their focus on the implications of international trade and investment agreements (CNCA, ICLMG, CCIC's regional working groups, PWYP, C4TF). The increased interest in this issue often correlates with a drive for domestic resource mobilization, or advocating for local decision making power in international agreements (particularly among indigenous, low-income, rural, or marginalized populations), or as the recent UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2014[7] articulated it, "the enduring case for policy space"). Given the 2012 merger that created DFATD, is there a more coordinated response that the Canadian CSO community could have on the correlation (or lack thereof) between development, trade and investment?

B. Thematic gaps

1. Financing for development

With funding challenges a practical issue faced by many organizations in the sector (and members of these coalitions), it is interesting to observe that no coalitions are looking at the financing for development agenda – in particular with the disappearance of the North-South Institute and the Halifax Initiative, two entities that traditionally took on this focus. With Canada's Minister of International Development Christian Paradis acting as chair of the new Redesigning Development Finance Initiative (RDFI), a shift away from aid in the government's narrative, and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development taking place in Addis Ababa in July 2015 ahead of the adoption of the post-2015

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[7] Trade and Development Report 2014, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, page 13. Retrieved from: http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2014overview_en.pdf

development agenda, how is Canadian civil society contributing to these discussions? These are particularly important, since those discussions may have a dramatic role in shaping the future of this sector. C4TF is taking on one aspect of the Financing for Development question – taxation and tax evasion and avoidance – and many coalitions are looking at the issue of trade and investment, and an effort should be made to connect those elements together. Perhaps it is a mandate beyond the scope of current coalitions, in which case a new working group or reference group could be formed on this topic.

2. Sustainable Economic Growth

Continuing on the theme of trade, investment, and the implications that broader economic considerations have on development objectives, the absence of groups working on Sustainable Economic Growth (SEG) was a gap noted in the 2011 study[8].

What is clear from this current study is that groups are increasingly interested in general issues related to economic growth, as well as the particular role of the private sector (multinational, Canadian and developing country) in development. Many coalitions are looking at how their specific sectoral focus might relate to these issues – be it in terms of food security (such as the FSPG), child protection (ICPNC), corporate accountability and mining (CNCA), issues related to broader finance (C4TF), or the role of women in projects that include private sector partnerships (CQFD). In these cases, coalitions are either looking at the role of the very local, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, or large Canadian companies.

3. Peace, security, and militarization

Another notable gap highlighted by the 2011 study, coalition work on topics of peace, security, and militarization remains relatively minimal. The declining activity and dramatic budget cuts of Peacebuild underscores the continuing void of coalition work on conflict issues. While HRN looks at conflict through a humanitarian response lens, and CCAC looks at arms trade issues and the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), a comprehensive network is still lacking. ICLMG is tracking how Canadian legislation around terrorism has threatened organizations that take on peacebuilding, particularly in contexts where community mediation programs involve community leaders from "terrorist" organizations (such as Hamas in Gaza or Lebanon, or the Taliban in Afghanistan). With the closure of the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Center (known as the Pearson Center), and given Canada's decline in peacekeeping activity through the UN, is there a renewed need to address peace, security, and militarization issues from a civil society perspective? Peacebuild noted that they are considering re-energizing the network within the next year and evaluating what contribution the coalition could make to the sector. Will its new form fulfill this mandate in the coalition landscape?

4. The need for policy and advocacy work, especially in humanitarian response

While many coalitions are taking on a strong policy and advocacy role, there is a notable void in the area of humanitarian response. With the HRN (formerly PAGER) changing direction to respond to member needs by focusing primarily on internal learning, and the Humanitarian Coalition's primary role as a fundraising platform and unified media response to humanitarian crises, who is assuming the role of providing a rigorous policy analysis for humanitarian work?

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[8] . SEG remains one of the three main thematic priority areas on the development side of DFATD, focusing on "building economic foundations… growing businesses… and investing in the employment potential of all"http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/FRA-101515146-QKD

C. Other areas of overlap and common concerns

1. Looking to the election

As noted above, several coalitions are hoping to make their issue more prominent leading up to the election in 2015 in hopes that policy makers will take formal positions or even make pre-election commitments. This raises a legitimate concern: will there be too much competition for "airtime" with different agendas pushing for their issue to be at the forefront? It is no secret that international development issues are rarely prominent during election season, or even foreign affairs for that matter. This time may be different, however, with the Conservative government already indicating a willingness to promote an international brand. Nevertheless, do coalitions risk competing for what little space exists for international issues? Or would they be better served focusing on select key messages and speaking with a unified voice in order to see foreign affairs and/or international development issue on the pre-election agenda?

2. Research overlap and dissemination considerations

Research initiatives from coalitions are generally quite specific (such as country-specific free trade agreements, case studies on climate change adaptation projects, research on genetically-modified products, or evaluations and analysis of the efficacy of WASH initiatives). While coalitions may be focused on producing a depth of research specific to the needs of coalition members, there are some thematic areas of overlap in their work. For example, on the topic of the role of the private sector in development, FSPG looked at private sector partnerships in projects with smallholder farmers, while CQFD is looking at private sector partnerships and the role of women, and WRPG is studying the implications of economic inequality for women. While they each speak to the specific mandate of each coalition, the amount of overlap suggests there are some relevant lessons to be shared. The possibility of CCIC playing the role of a research hub (see below), or by collaborating with CASID's *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* would allow such research initiatives to be curated and examined side-by-side. Strengthening collaborations between CASID's membership, individual academic researchers, or thematically-focused research chairs, represents another opportunity.

3. Awareness of thematic overlap

Overlapping membership was noted above, along with the assumption that cross-pollination would occur rather naturally when organizational members participated in a range of coalitions. But to what extent do these cross-walks actually occur? Do coalitions provide space for reflection where mandates and work plans may overlap with other coalitions? Do organizational members themselves encourage dialogue amongst their own staff who participate in various coalitions, so that they may share findings and emerging opportunities in coalitions? Doing so may equip staff to identify cross-cutting themes and areas of overlap. In any case, there may be value in formalizing a way to identify areas of overlapping interest among different coalitions, and generate synergies where there is limited capacity.

4. Engaging non-traditional actors: what about the private sector?

As noted earlier, coalitions have expanded their membership base to include actors other than NGOs, such as academics, lawyers, medical professionals, engineers, and individual experts. These new "stakeholders" were recognized by interviewees as valuable additions who provide alternative perspectives to significant development challenges.

The activities and influence of private sector actors is certainly a focus of many coalitions. With focus areas including tax justice and financial transparency (C4TF, PWYP), human rights issues and the impact of corporations on local communities (CNCA, Common Frontiers [CF], UNDRIP), and trade and investment considerations (TIRP, CCIC's regional working groups, MPH), coalitions are working on issues related to the private sector. It is unclear, however, to what extent the perspectives of businesses and companies contribute to the work of coalitions. While this is undoubtedly a controversial issue, should coalitions consider ways to incorporate these alternative perspectives in their dialogue on achieving development objectives?

5. Prioritize your funding future

As noted earlier, most coalitions are member-funded. In fact, three-quarters of the coalitions surveyed receive member funding, and about one-third of coalitions are exclusively funded by their members. Some other coalitions receive funding from IDRC, DFATD, foundations, or other project-specific grants.

When asked about their funding futures, most interviewees were confident that their funding mechanisms would remain relatively unchanged. Where it existed, alternative funding ideas seemed quite theoretical, or even nominal (for example, some consideration was given to applying for foundation funding or other grant opportunities, but those opportunities were not thoroughly pursued). Most interviewees seemed acutely aware of the current funding realities facing many of their member organizations, and identified the uncertainty in just how long they would be able to support the work of the coalition through this funding model.

That said, it was surprising to hear that more significant funding diversification plans were not in motion, even when this very issue was identified as an area of concern in the 2011 study. Perhaps it is an indication that the current funding system is operating well. Again, interviewees noted the value of member contributions as a practical gesture of support or even a token of investment in the coalition's work. Still, the funding realities in the sector may provide grounds to re-evaluate how coalitions are funded. As a next step, would it be worth exploring innovative funding mechanisms for coalitions, developing a collective approach to potential funders, holding fundraising workshops, or exploring and strengthening the Foundation community in Canada?

6. Evaluating membership criteria

Several coalitions said they were reviewing what it meant to be a "member" of a coalition. This often came in the context of evaluating membership lists and activity, and reflecting on how some members had been members for a long period of time, but hadn't been an active participant in recent years. One interviewee noted, "There are some members on our mailing list… we're not sure why they're still there, or if they're even interested in the work."

These review processes take several different forms. Some coalitions, particularly the smaller ones, conduct an annual check-in with all of their members. Others are considering introducing specific terms for serving on the steering committee or board – giving other members an opportunity to share the burden of the work. These may not necessarily be "fixed terms" where members will have to give up their leadership role, but regular intervals where the coalition can evaluate the members' roles and level of contribution. Bringing in new members to fill these roles, however, may still be a challenge for many coalitions.

Not much more was said on how coalitions are evaluating participation levels and the perceived value of the coalition from its members. Perhaps this could be discovered with further feedback from coalition leaders, or maybe it is an aspect of coalitions that needs more attention.

V. Implications of these findings for CCIC

A. How do coalitions perceive CCIC contributing to their work?

In considering how CCIC can support the work of coalitions going forward, it is important to reflect on the perceived role that CCIC has with these coalitions:

Leader and adviser: CCIC plays a key role on steering committees, boards, or establishing coalitions. Examples of coalitions that identified CCIC in this role include CCIC's regional working groups (APG, ACF, APWG), MPH, Voices, Peacebuild, WASH, and WRPG.

Amplifier: CCIC is an access point for broader membership. By sharing messaging and signing on to campaigns, CCIC helps coalitions get their messaging out. Examples include the UNDRIP, CCAC, , CNCA, PWYP, Voices, and WASH.

Policy Analyst: CCIC participates actively in the work of coalitions by providing a helpful background or context and policy expertise. Examples include C4D, HRN, FSPG, HC.

Collaborator: Most commonly, CCIC supports the work of coalitions through co-hosting events, or by maintaining an ongoing dialogue. Examples include C4TF, CF, ICLMG, and PWYP.

B. How should CCIC respond to these specific roles?

CCIC can look at this list of perceived roles in coalition work and appreciate the diverse range of contributions. This may also be an opportunity for CCIC to play to its own strengths and prioritize their participation. Should CCIC look at coalitions and evaluate the potential policy contribution CCIC can make – be it through the contributions of individual staff members, or collectively as a team? Should CCIC step in and provide leadership in emerging coalitions as they establish themselves? Or should the Council focus more of its time on coalitions that have a greater overlap in members or coalition leadership? Or should CCIC look to reach out to other coalitions that have less overlap of members as a way of engaging new audiences and potential members?

Below are several thematic roles that CCIC could maintain, or consider taking on in the future:

1. Continue to be an advocacy base

Many coalitions identified the "amplifier" role (see above) that CCIC plays in sharing a coalition's messaging and campaign efforts. CCIC represents a broader audience than individual coalitions, so utilizing this network is a practical way of engaging those who are interested, but not yet formally engaged, in a particular campaign. Other coalitions identified "shared advocacy" as a key area where they could step up their engagement with CCIC. Going forward, CCIC should maintain its role as a platform for the voices of international development CSOs, and coalitions, to be heard.

2. Build policy capacity among organizations

With the changing composition of many coalitions towards program staff (away from the policy-focused staff that used to compose many coalitions), CCIC could play a role in building up the policy capacity and lens of many of these programming staff, strengthening the overall work of coalitions to engage in policy dialogue and development. This could take the form of workshops that explore the rationale for engaging in policy development, doing research and policy development work, and how a policy lens might strengthen their work. Perhaps some collaboration with Canadian institutions and universities could create valuable training opportunities, especially for organizations that have reduced their policy mandate.

3. Create or support a Research Hub

Research plays a significant role in the work of many coalitions. As they provide depth of insight on issues that are important to their members, coalitions run the risk of "silo-ing" themselves in their own research, and losing sight of some of the broader context and research that could help inform their work, particularly when there are thematic areas of overlap.

CCIC should also be aware of the current research capacity of the civil society community, which appears to be in decline. This point is emphasized with the closure of the Halifax Initiative and the North-South Institute. Several interviewees expressed interest in joint research with CCIC. Given CCIC's reduced capacity since 2010, however, consideration should be given to the structure and financing of such an arrangement.

One consideration would be creating or supporting a research hub, which could take one of several forms. In light of CCIC's mandate to be a convening body in Canada's international development sector, CCIC could re-evaluate its research role and consider being a contact point for both coalitions and academics to work together, test out new research methodologies and mechanisms, and build the research capacity of CSOs. This role may require bringing on an additional staff person. CCIC could also look to curate research publications released by coalitions and member organizations through a simple online, searchable interface (perhaps something similar to the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation's Global Hive, but with a focus on research instead of public engagement). Or CCIC could look to collaborate more directly with CASID on the production of the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, highlighting civil-society driven research, or through formalizing research initiatives with some of CASID's thematically focused academic members. Collaborating with the IDRC is another clear connection that could help further consolidate CCIC's potential role in the landscape of civil society -led research. Working with IDRC could also identify possible opportunities to link academics between the north and south.

4. Maintain a finger on the pulse of DFATD

The findings of this research highlight the need for CCIC to continue - or even increase - its engagement with DFATD, particularly with regards to liaising with DFATD and monitoring the department at the most senior levels.

There are several cross-cutting issues already identified in this report, around which CCIC could provide the foundation for further engagement or conversation with DFATD. Given the overlapping mandate between the UN and the new DFATD, for instance, is there potential for a more comprehensive, higher-level analysis of what Canada is doing at the UN with opportunity for dialogue with senior DFATD staff to

inform this perspective? Given the human-rights focus of many coalitions (in the form of women's rights issues, children's rights issues, democratic rights and liberties, or the rights of marginalized communities), could these priorities be connected to an updated reflection on the government's ODA Accountability Act or further advocacy on specific issues related to human rights – be they civil and political, or economic, social and cultural?

Highlighting this work could take various forms. These issues could be themes for upcoming events or conferences. They could be the subject of further research and studies commissioned by CCIC. CCIC could also incorporate elements of these themes into advocacy work or the election campaign. However these themes are used, CCIC should consider how coalition work could inform a common narrative on these issues and be brought to DFATD, or how conversations with higher-level DFATD staff could inform the work of coalitions.

This is particularly important in the context of trying to deepen collaboration with the Development side of DFATD, while further expanding relationships in the Foreign Affairs and Trade side of the new department. Should CCIC consider a stronger focus on the entire DFATD department, including the evolving relationships with the Foreign Affairs and Trade parts of DFATD? Furthermore, could CCIC envision opportunities to take a "whole of government" approach on certain issues, collaborating with departments such as Aboriginal Affairs, Environment Canada, or Agriculture Canada?

5. Keep hosting joint events to build understanding

CCIC has held several events in the past helping organizations to bridge the knowledge gap on specific issues (CRA regulations on political activity, for example). These are often issues that impact a broad range of CCIC's members, and other NGOs. Several interviewees expressed appreciation for CCIC's participation in these events, and identified potential for more of this type of collaboration in the future (for example, FPIC could be one issue that could build on CCIC's previous work on Human Rights Based Approaches).

VI. Conclusion

One thing that is clear from this research is that coalitions are a common space for organizations to exercise reflective practice. These coalitions provide significant value to members by giving them a forum to look beyond their individual organizational experiences, in order to identify the broader context, share effective practices, or articulate policy and advocacy-driven responses.

This reflective practice must also extend beyond individual coalitions. Identifying cross-cutting issues and challenges allows coalitions and their members to acknowledge that others may be going through similar experiences. Areas of overlap demonstrate where coalitions can paint a broader picture of an issue, or clarify the nuances of thematic areas of work.

Yet to simply identify and reflect on these issues is not enough. Just as coalitions respond to the experiences of their members, coalitions also have an opportunity to respond to the overlaps, gaps, and shared challenges identified in this study. In a context where many interviewees indicated that their coalition would "do more, if they had the time and resources," looking to the experience and mandate of other coalitions identifies areas of overlap and possible areas of collaboration. The areas of overlap could be a practical way for coalitions to address capacity issues and build an even greater collective voice for impact. In other instances the context may cause coalitions to shift their mandate, fluctuate in size, or

even conclude. Where gaps are found, they may call for interested parties to briefly coalesce, while other occasions may be opportunities for new coalitions to form.

Finally, while individual coalitions would benefit by reflecting and responding to the current dynamics of "the coalition landscape," CCIC may also find opportunity to respond. Convening coalitions on cross-cutting issues and providing a common platform for the international development community are central aspects of CCIC's mandate. The issues identified in this study could provide opportunities for CCIC to both maintain and build on this significant role in the sector.