

# Strong Partnerships, Stronger Canada

A Snapshot of Cooperation Canada's 2026 Pre-Budget Submission

**Cooperation Canada and its 100+ members call upon the government to keep its decades-long investment in international assistance.**

In the current global context, Canada must reassess how it engages globally to protect its economic security and long-term prosperity. The world's fastest-growing economies are increasingly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and the countries Canada supports today will help shape tomorrow's global economy. Deepening engagement with these regions is therefore essential to Canada's resilience. These investments not only support emerging economies become more resilient and self-sustaining, they also deliver long-term value for Canada by expanding opportunities for trade, strengthening supply chains, and building more stable partnerships.

## ODA is Not Charity, It's Strategic

- **Conflict prevention:** Every \$1 in prevention can save up to \$100 in military intervention costs.
- **Trade & prosperity:** Every \$1 of ODA yields tangible economic returns for Canadian exports.
- **Security at home:** Tackles root causes of conflict and instability before they reach Canada's borders.
- **International advocacy:** Multiplies principled and pragmatic influence.

Canada's ability to sustain this engagement and develop this opportunity is also increasingly at risk. Reductions announced in Budget 2025

risk weakening Canada's capacity to engage consistently and effectively in regions that are central to future global growth. Establishing a protected core of official development assistance (ODA) would ensure Canada can continue addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality while also strengthening its own economic resilience, national security, and global influence in an increasingly complex and contested world.

## Recommendations for Budget 2026

### 1. Protect Poverty Reduction-Focused ODA – \$5.5 Billion Per Year

In a constrained fiscal environment, Canada's ODA must be targeted where it is most needed and where it delivers the greatest impact. A protected core of \$5.5 billion would ensure limited concessional resources are directed to least developed, low-income, and fragile contexts, as well as poverty-focused programming in lower middle-income countries, where alternative sources of financing remain limited.

This is both efficient and necessary: ODA has the highest value when it supports essential services,

strengthens institutions, reduces instability, and creates the conditions for inclusive growth in places where private capital cannot fill the gap. Protecting this core would preserve the integrity of Canada's international assistance and ensure that other priorities are pursued in addition to poverty reduction.

## 2. Protect Humanitarian Assistance - \$962.7 Million Per Year

- Humanitarian crises are protracted and cyclical, requiring sustained engagement rather than repeated emergency responses.
- By supporting the stabilization of fragile regions, humanitarian assistance creates the conditions for long-term economic development.

## 3. Ensure Trade-Related ODA Complies with Legislation

- All trade and investment-related initiatives financed through Canada's international assistance should comply with the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act and demonstrate tangible development benefits for partner countries, not only economic returns.
- ODA is most effective when anchored in its core purpose: poverty reduction, human rights, and

inclusive growth. These objectives are aligned with Canada's strategic interests.

### Enabling Measures for Impact

- Rapid response funding for civil society organizations and human rights defenders.
- Recommitment to gender equality and inclusive development.
- New and additional international climate investments consisting of high-quality finance.
- Budget transparency improvements for a coherent long-term approach to international cooperation.

Budget 2026 provides an opportunity for Canada to reaffirm its leadership by protecting poverty-focused official development assistance and strengthening humanitarian response. Cooperation Canada and its members stand ready to work collaboratively with government to ensure Canada's international assistance is impactful, transparent and inclusive.

[Read the full pre-budget submission](#)

## About Cooperation Canada

Since 1968, Cooperation Canada has united civil society organizations dedicated to international development and humanitarian action. We strengthen Canada's global impact by convening leaders, shaping policy, and equipping organizations with the tools, expertise, and evidence needed to deliver results. Working alongside governments, communities, and changemakers in Canada and around the world, we advance practical solutions that create a fairer, safer, and more sustainable world. Grounded in credible insights, real-world expertise, emerging research, and strategic partnerships, we help ensure Canada's global commitments translate into tangible impact.

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