QUESTION: Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Question: Canada has not yet honoured its commitment to contribute 0.7 percent to ODA (Official Development Assistance).  It stands at a dismal 0.24% the lowest since 2003.   As a result, many development programs have suffered. .

What is your position/your party’s position on Canada reaching this target of 0.7% commitment to ODA?

Background Information:

GRAN participants might like to introduce this question with a statement about GRAN’s work advocating for grandmothers and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa and how critical an increase in Canada’s ODA is to the rebuilding of these lives.

In 1969, at the urging of the Canadian Prime Minister the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution calling for member countries to contribute a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA). The definition of ODA is set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Canada is a member of DAC which defines ODA as “grants or loans to developing countries and multilateral agencies active in development that are undertaken by the official sector at concessional financial terms (if a loan, having a grant element of at least 25%) with the promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective.” Since the 1970’s it has been widely used as an indicator of international aid flow.

Seventeen of the DAC’s 28 member countries increased their ODA in 2014, while 11 (including Canada), reported a decrease. Net ODA from DAC countries stood at 0.3% of GNI. Five countries met the longstanding UN target for an ODA/GNI ratio of 0.7%: Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. At 0.24%, Canada’s contribution stood at the lowest since 2003; the 2015 budget provided no increase.

As a result of declining contributions, many development programs have suffered.

An increase in ODA means more money to provide food for the world's hungry; more money to protect children in war-torn countries; more money to provide antiretroviral drugs to treat AIDS; more money for international humanitarian crises; more money to improve maternal, newborn and child health; and more money for children’s education and life-long learning.

The UK recently passed a bill to honour their pledge of a 0.7% foreign aid target, becoming the first G7 nation to enshrine in law a commitment to this UN Development goal.

0.7% commitment to ODA is also being considered as a target for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We want to see Canada pay its fair share. Canada paying its fair share will aid people around the globe and those with whom GRAN is especially concerned : the grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa in their struggle to rebuild the lives of their children, their grandchildren and their communities.