



Advocating for Grandmothers, Vulnerable Children and Youth in Africa

BRIEF SUBMITTED FOR “X” PARTY PLATFORM ELECTION 2019

[Note: GRAN sent a version of this brief to each of the four major federal political parties.]

Subject: Platform on Foreign Affairs

Issue # 1 – International Assistance

Question: Canada has provided the relatively low level of 0.28% of Gross National Income to international assistance, well below our country’s commitment of 0.7%. Does the “X” party have a position in ensuring that Canada fulfills its commitment to 0.7%? As a government, what steps will you take to do so? What do you consider to be an achievable target date?

Background

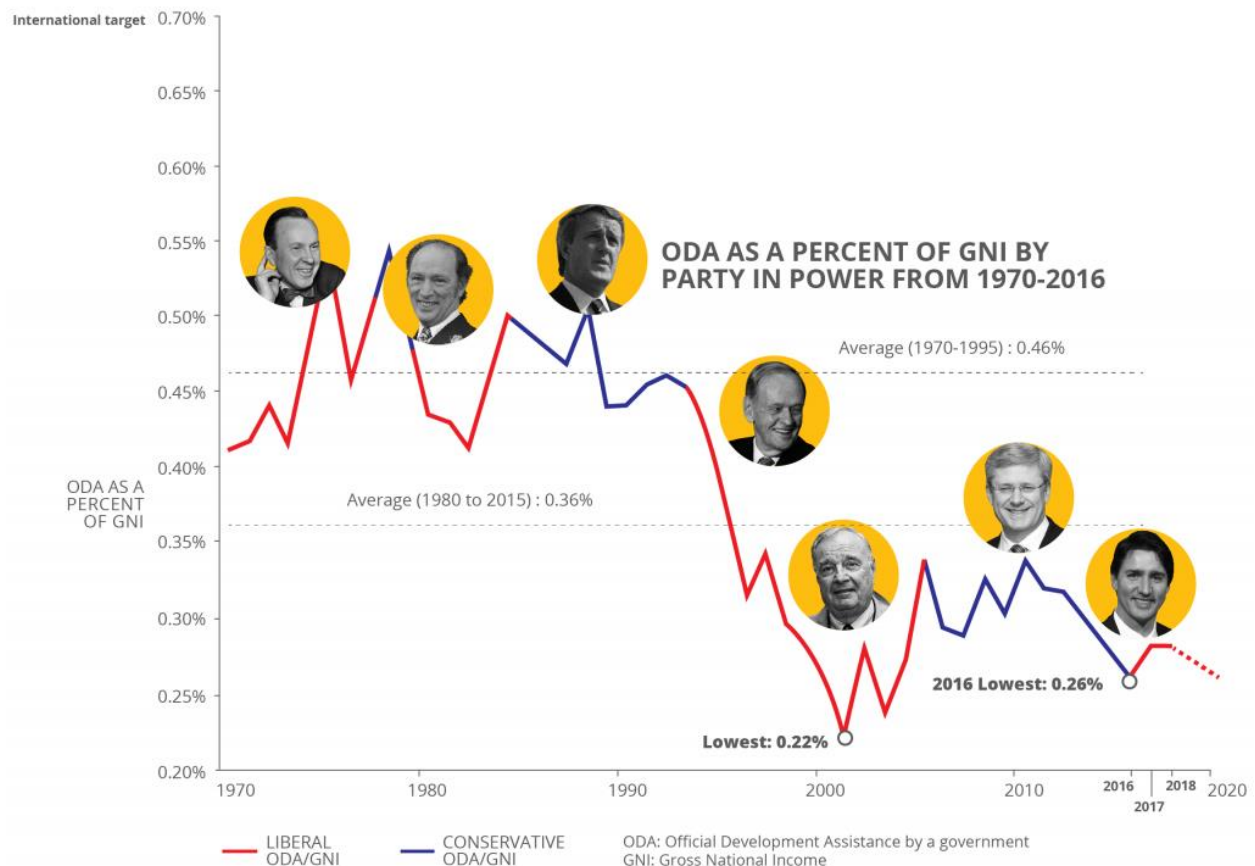
In 1969, at the urging of the Canadian Prime Minister the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution calling for member countries to contribute a minimum of 0.7% of GNI to Official Development Assistance (ODA). The definition of ODA is set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Twenty-two of the DAC’s 29 member countries increased their ODA in 2016, while seven (including Canada), reported a decrease. The average contribution from DAC countries stood at 0.4% 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. The 2019 Canadian budget provides no increase.

An increase in international assistance 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 support older women/grandmothers in their crucial roles as caregivers and community leaders; and more money for children’s education and life-long learning.

Current Status

Canada’s current contribution stands at a dismal 0.28% almost an all-time low.



Considerations

If Canada is to fulfill its commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it must make an equal commitment to increased international assistance.

Canada's ambitious goal to reach the poorest and most vulnerable, with a focus on women and girls, requires equally ambitious international assistance.

During the 2016 International Assistance Review consultations that resulted in the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), one of the eight key findings was that many Canadians want to see increases to international assistance funding.

Recommendation

GRAN members want to see Canada pay its fair share and honour its commitment to contribute 0.7% of GNI to international assistance by setting out a path of ambitious targets in each budget year. 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 in the wake of the AIDS pandemic.

Issue #2 – Fighting AIDS, TB and Malaria: The Global Fund and Stop TB Partnership

Question: Canada will be making a pledge to the Sixth Replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria by October 2019. In addition, Canada was a signatory to the 2018 Political Declaration of the UN High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB, which proposed to accelerate national and collective actions, investments and innovations...” to fight TB. What is the XXX party’s position on Canada’s pledge to the Global Fund and what will be its plan to tackle TB and increase efforts, including financial commitments at home and abroad?

Background

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria is a “partnership that mobilizes and invests nearly US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need.” The Fund has saved 27 million lives since its inception in 2002. The number of deaths caused by AIDS, TB and malaria each year has been reduced by one-third. Canada’s pledge in 2016 was for a total of \$804 million, an increase of more than 20% over the previous pledge. As a result, many lives have been saved. Now, more funding is needed in order to eliminate these diseases and GRAN and other civil society organizations are asking for a pledge of \$1 billion (CAD).

An estimated 920 000 people living with HIV worldwide, fell ill with TB in 2017. TB is the leading cause of death among people with HIV, accounting for some 300 000 people who died from HIV-associated TB in 2017.

Current Status

After years of progress in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria, new threats such as shortfalls in funding, increasing insecticide and drug resistance, a youth surge in sub-Saharan Africa, and increasing migration have slowed progress and enabled the diseases to gain ground.

The Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) calls for significant increases in international funding to meet the 2030 targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end HIV, TB and malaria. GFAN calls for **an increase of more than 20%** to ensure a fund of between \$16.8 and \$18 billion (USD) for 2020-2022. The Global Fund itself has set a minimum goal of \$14 billion for this replenishment, the minimum required to maintain current programming. To achieve the SDGs, we must do better.

On September 26, 2018, the United Nations (UN) convened a UNHLM to increase international efforts and financing to tackle TB. The Political Declaration from this meeting calls for scaled-up investments in collaborative research, improved access to quality diagnosis and treatment, and better access to integrated, people-centred and community-based prevention, treatment and care, with affordable drugs that are effective, safe and equitably available. It laid out two goals to achieve by 2022: preventing at least 30 million people from becoming ill with TB and successfully treating 40 million people who are already infected with the disease. The UN plans

to issue a Progress Report in 2020, as well as host a comprehensive review at a future UNHLM in 2023.

Considerations

HIV is the leading global cause of early death among women ages 15–49. TB is the world's most lethal infectious disease. Malaria remains a major killer of children, taking the life of a child every two minutes.

As a global champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, both at home and abroad, Canada has an important role to play in reversing the increasing incidence of HIV in young girls and women in sub-Saharan Africa.

TB is a global disease, but its impact is also being felt in Canada where we have seen an increase in cases since 2016. There were 1,796 cases of active TB reported in Canada in 2017, many in Indigenous communities particularly among the Inuit, representing a 2.6% increase from the year previous.

There is an urgent need to provide increased funding for the testing and treatment of TB as 40% of cases are thought to be missed each year and that deaths due to MDR-TB account for about one third of all antimicrobial resistance deaths worldwide.

Recommendation

GRAN -- along with partners such as the International Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD), RESULTS Canada, and ONE -- is calling on Canada to meet the need and to demonstrate leadership in the fight against the epidemics by committing to an increase of \$65M (CAD) per year to the Global Fund for 2020-2022. An investment of an extra \$65 million per year for the three years would be a 24% increase over Canada's investment in 2016 (a level of increase that is consistent with its increased commitment in 2016). As a founding member of the Global Fund, Canada can continue to lead by making a bold investment in global health.

Canada also needs to commit funds directed towards the elimination of TB by 2030 by continuing its focus on ending TB in Canadian Indigenous communities and continuing to support and provide funding for the UN STOP TB Partnership.

Issue #3 - Mining Justice

Question: The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) is now an advisory post that will be unable to ensure Canadian mining companies respect human rights in mining communities around the world. What is the XXX party's position on restoring the full mandate to the CORE, ensuring the appropriate powers to investigate allegations of human rights and environmental abuses abroad?

Background

Almost half of the world's mining companies are registered in Canada; currently, there are 1300 mining companies based here. Canada has been criticized internationally for many years for its lack of corporate accountability abroad. Multiple human rights violations linked to Canadian mining companies have been documented: four reports from the United Nations; a study based on 15 years of data from the Justice and Accountability Project at Osgoode Hall Law School; hearings by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and research done by many civil society organizations in Canada and abroad. Violations include environmental, social, and financial problems, such as an increase in gender-based violence; appropriation of land and water without local consultation; serious illness or death resulting from toxic chemicals in the air, land and water; injuries or death of peaceful protesters; and destruction of cultural values and the social fabric of communities. Civil society organizations, faith groups, and unions throughout Canada have lobbied for an ombudsperson for ten years, and during the election campaign in 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to establish an independent ombudsperson with the powers to investigate incidents in mining communities.

Fifteen months after the CORE was first announced, with a mandate to investigate human rights abuses linked to Canadian corporate activity abroad, Sheri Meyerhoffer was appointed to be the "first in the world" to hold this position. The mandate, however, has changed. Instead of the power to investigate independently, or to compel documents and witnesses, she is to "review" allegations of abuses, an advisory post little different from the office it will replace.

Current Status

When the appointment was announced, Minister of Trade Diversification James Carr stated that expert legal advice was being sought concerning the legality of asking mining companies to provide documents and witnesses, and the research would take two months to complete.

Considerations

Women and children have been shown to be the most affected by land and water seizures, pollution, and the gender-based violence that frequently occurs in mining communities. They experience the negative social, ecological, and economic impacts associated with mining on a daily basis. A lack of mining justice impacts many of the United Nations Sustainable Goals, especially the Right to Health; Freedom from Violence; Economic Security; and the Right to Education and Life-Long Learning. Women, who are traditionally involved in agriculture, are

forced off their land, which is also too contaminated to farm, and they must travel many hours to obtain water

Recommendation

The Canadian government must fulfill the promise, made in January, 2018, to establish an ombudsperson who is independent from government and corporations, can compel witnesses and the release of documents, can recommend and monitor sanctions as needed, report the findings publicly, and has the budget to accomplish all of this. An incomplete mandate was announced at the time of the appointment of ombudsperson Sheri Meyerhoffer; these powers must be reinstated and respected as soon as possible.

Issue #4 – Increase Funding to the Global Partnership for Education

Question: Will your party continue to support an increase to funding for education in development specifically the Global Partnership for Education?

Background

Education is a fundamental human right that is unrealized in many parts of the developing world. Education is key to achieving development and influences all 17 of the sustainable development goals. The GPE is achieving excellent results, a few of which are:

- 77 million more children were in primary school in 2016 in partner countries compared to 2002
- 76% of children completed primary school in 2015 in partner countries compared to 63% in 2002
- 18.5 million children were supported by GPE since 2015.

The fourth replenishment conference for the Global Partnership to Education (GPE) will take place in 2020. Canada's pledge in 2018 was for a total of \$120 million over three years, an increase of 50% over the previous pledge. As a result, the GPE is able to help fund the growth of national education systems in many developing countries. Many more children, especially girls, will have an opportunity to have access to a quality education because of Canada's commitment to the GPE.

Current Status

At the G7 summit in Charlevoix in June 2017, Canada announced an historic investment of \$400 million toward education for girls and women in crisis and conflict situations. Although we are still waiting for this money to be spent, a \$50 million commitment to Education Cannot Wait fund was made earlier this year, making Canada the second highest donor country.

Canada's commitments to education must continue to increase to reduce the number of children not in school and not learning.

Considerations

By increasing access to quality education, the results can be transformational for an individual, a community and society at large. The value of investing in education is indisputable: it reduces inequality between women and men, improves economic development, improves health, promotes peace, and lifts people out of poverty.

Recommendation

GRAN will be calling on Canada in 2020 to demonstrate its leadership in meeting the needs of children out of school and increase its financial commitment to the Global Partnership for Education as well as its bilateral commitments to education programmes in sub Saharan Africa.

The Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)

Who we are:

We are volunteers from across Canada working together to influence policy change and stimulate effective action in Canada and internationally to promote and protect the human rights of grandmothers, children and youth of sub-Saharan Africa.

As our name suggests, GRAN is made up of a strong core of older women, but GRAN welcomes and values the partnership and efforts of all.

What we do:

We advocate at the local, national and international level for policies and programs that will address the needs of African grandmothers as they strive to sustain their families and communities in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

We educate to raise public awareness and invite engagement and mobilization. This is done through direct messaging, media, social media, campaigns, petitions, events, presentations, and more.

We partner with like-minded organizations to amplify our voices and increase our impact.

We take action in four key areas which are all in support of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals endorsed by Canada and 194 other countries in 2015.

We advocate for the right to:

- Education and life-long learning
- Health
- Freedom from violence
- Economic security and social protection

How do we advocate?

We advocate by meeting with MPs, writing letters to the Prime Minister and members of Cabinet, and engaging with organizations that have an impact on international development. We speak up in our communities by submitting Letters to the Editor, circulating petitions and advocacy campaign post cards, and holding events to draw attention to human rights that are being violated or ignored. We take every opportunity to participate when, where, and as we can to influence Canadian and international decision-makers as they make choices, allocate resources, and develop policies and programs that impact the world's most vulnerable.

Partners and Allies

Canadian Council for International Co-operation
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Canadian International Education Policy Working Group
Girls Not Brides
Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance
Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People
Global Treatment Access Group
HelpAge Canada

International Coalition on AIDS & Development
International Longevity Centre Canada
Médecins Sans Frontières
Raising Teenagers Uganda
Results Canada
Translators Without Borders
Uganda Reach the Aged Association
UN Women
Women, Peace & Security Network