



engineers without borders
ingénieurs sans frontières
Canada

Backgrounder: Canada's ODA, FIAP and G7 Presidency

Canada's Official Development Assistance

Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹ is government funding that is provided to developing countries at concessional terms in order to promote social welfare and economic development. In other words, it is a transfer of funds from a wealthy country's government to a less wealthy country to support some of the world's most vulnerable people. ODA is an important source of income for developing countries because it helps these countries to address the root causes of poverty and inequality in their communities.

Canada currently spends 0.26% of its Gross National Income (GNI)² on ODA per year, which is the lowest level in recent history. The average spending of all of the world's donor countries is 0.32% of GNI, and several have reached the internationally recognized target of 0.7% set by the United Nations (UN) at the recommendation of Canada's former Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson. Unfortunately, this is a target that Canada has never managed to reach. In fact, while the average donor country spent 9% more on ODA in the past year, Canada's spending decreased by 4%,³ and amongst the G7, Canada has the lowest ODA spending in absolute terms.

¹ OECD. Official development assistance – definition and coverage (ND).

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>

² Aniket Bhushan and Rachael Calleja. Canada's 2016 ODA/GNI ratio: 0.26 (April 11, 2017). Canadian International Development Platform. <http://cidpnsi.ca/canadas-2016-odagni-ratio/>

³ The Development Assistance Committee. Development aid rises again in 2016 (April 11, 2017). OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2016-detail-ed-summary.pdf>



Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

In June 2017, the Government of Canada released its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), a subsection of its Feminist Foreign Policy. The policy was produced after a lengthy consultation process known as the “International Assistance Review” that saw 15,000 people participate from civil society, government and the private sector.

The guiding idea behind the FIAP is that “advancing gender equality and promoting equal rights for women and girls is the most effective way to reduce poverty”⁴. It has six areas of focus including: 1) gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, 2) human dignity, 3) growth that works for everyone, 4) environment and climate action, 5) inclusive governance, and 6) peace and security.

While the policy has been positively received by many civil society and private sector organizations in Canada, the Canadian government has been criticized for failing to provide new funding to execute on it.

Canada's G7 Presidency

The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal body of democratic, industrialized countries, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, that meets every year to discuss global economic, security and governance issues.

Each year, a different member country holds the Presidency and leads the policy agenda. In 2018, Canada holds the Presidency and will host the G7 Leaders' Summit in Charlevoix, Quebec, from June 8-9. The Government of Canada has announced that the five focus areas of

⁴ Global Affairs Canada. Canada launches new Feminist International Assistance Policy (June 9, 2017). Government of Canada.

https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/canada_launches_newfeministinternationalassistancepolicy.html



the summit will be: 1) investing in growth that works for everyone, 2) preparing for jobs of the future, 3) advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, 4) working together on climate change, oceans and clean energy, and 5) building a more peaceful and secure world.⁵

This provides an opportunity for Canada to demonstrate its leadership on the world stage, and an opportunity for civil society to work with the government to achieve its international commitments.

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About Engineers Without Borders Canada

EWB is a Canadian registered charity that brings people and ideas together to tackle the most crucial causes of poverty and inequality. Bolstered by its network of 40 chapters and 1,600 members, EWB provides seed funding, talent and mentorship to social entrepreneurs throughout sub-Saharan Africa. EWB's advocacy work focuses on increasing Canada's development effectiveness through equipping young Canadians with the skills to engage the public and political leaders.

For more information, visit www.ewb.ca or email advocacy@ewb.ca.

⁵ N/A. Prime Minister unveils themes for Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency (December 14, 2017). Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada. <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/12/14/prime-minister-unveils-themes-canadas-2018-g7-presidency>