



# INFLUENCE INSPIRE INNOVATE

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS

In partnership with

The Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID)

& Aga Khan Foundation Canada

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## CONTEXT

The election of President Donald Trump and the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom have underscored a powerful global risk towards nationalism, populism and isolationism. Even as the international community faces a global refugee challenge of unprecedented proportions, numerous protracted humanitarian emergencies, increasing economic inequality, and the evermore severe effects of climate change, a growing number of countries appear to be turning inwards.

This environment is also informed by Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This comprehensive and integrated programme brings together the three pillars of economy, environment and society, with the ultimate objectives of ending poverty and inequality and protecting and promoting human rights by 2030. It is an ambitious, universal agenda that encompasses everyone, everywhere and leaves no one behind.

New policies and approaches are emerging in Canada too, both in response to global events and trends and as the implementation of the government's platform, priorities and commitments move forward. These policies and approaches seem, in contrast to the global isolationist trend, decidedly inclusive and internationalist. Most recently, in June 2017, Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy was launched promising an ambitious and transformative new agenda. This policy is the result of extensive consultations with Canadians, including active, coordinated, and sustained participation from the Canadian international development and humanitarian assistance community.

At the core of this Feminist International Assistance Policy is a commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. To achieve its vision of "a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world" Canada will be adopting feminist and human-rights-based approaches to development. The following action areas will also be prioritized: human dignity; growth that works for everyone; environment and climate action; inclusive governance; and peace and security. In addition, the policy includes: a strong commitment to the SDGs; a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, and those living in fragile states. In many respects, our sector has been advocating for these priorities for years, and they now seem to be within our reach.

Yet, at the same time, Canada has a flat-lined budget for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the current government is now positioned to have the lowest average ODA commitment in the last 50 years. This is especially important given the significant human and financial investments needed to deliver on the new Feminist

International Assistance Policy. And almost two years into Agenda 2030, which is supposed to transform global development efforts in support of the SDGs, Canada has no national implementation plan to achieve these objectives at home or abroad.

## SO, WHAT NOW?

We are at a turning point, with a unique opportunity to fundamentally transform the way we – government, civil society, academics and all Canadians, in a whole-of-society approach – work to engage with this changing environment, and the new policy directions at the global and national level, and to build a better world. Canada can be a truly progressive and impactful leader, rising to help meet today's global challenges – but only if we all rise to the occasion.

Now is the time to consider how Canadian civil society should position itself – in terms of programming, partnerships, and policy – to both tackle new challenges and implement and take advantage of these new policy opportunities. At this pivotal moment, how will civil society organizations respond – and lead?

## INFLUENCE INSPIRE INNOVATE: Realizing the potential of new policy directions

For the first time, the CCIC conference will be hosted in partnership with the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) & Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC). This 2-day event will welcome close to 250 stakeholders from international development and humanitarian civil society organizations (CSOs), academics and researchers, key government officials and policy makers. The conference aims to challenge and inspire participants to consider new ways of doing things which are consistent with the new international and domestic policy environments, including a Human Rights Based-Approach, a feminist approach that focuses on women and girls, reaching the most marginalized and excluded, and working in fragile contexts, etc. Participants will build on the most promising innovative practices and enhance the sector's capacity to influence future implementation of the new policy directions. One of the cross-cutting themes of this year's conference is collaboration for development between practitioners and academics, and many of its components will explore modalities of collaboration across these two sectors.

In addition to thought-provoking plenary sessions led by international and national keynote speakers, this year's conference workshops will be divided into 3 dynamic and engaging streams:

- **INFLUENCE:** participants will tackle the most current and relevant issues related to advocacy, government relations and policy priorities
- **INSPIRE:** participants will share success stories and best practices and discuss how these can contribute to shaping a collective vision for the future
- **INNOVATE:** participants will explore new partnerships, systems, technologies and practices while discussing how the sector can foster greater innovation