A Time to Act: Why Canadian International Development CSOs should care about the CIDA-DFAIT merger

ACIC Annual General Meeting
June 14, 2013
1. Context for development assistance leading up to the merger
2. The merger: how and why
3. Implications for the int’l development sector in Canada
4. CCIC members in action: the benchmarks and mobilization
Context for development assistance leading up to the merger

1. Growth, and therefore the private sector, are the magic formula for ending poverty (and CSOs are hardly in the picture!)
   a) However, growth is a necessary yet not sufficient condition for development
   b) And many of the middle income countries, where most of the poor are increasingly located, have the fiscal means to end poverty

2. Promoting Canada’s commercial interests abroad, and in particular the extractives, is a policy priority for this government, including CIDA

3. Blurring of the lines between Canada’s geo-political interests and development and HA objectives

4. *Politisation* of ODA allocation decisions
The merger: how and why

- Political decision – surprise announcement
- Budget announcement – budget omnibus bill, though “no budget implications”
- To enhance policy coherence and aid effectiveness
- Leveling the playing field and enshrining the mandate in law
- New legislation for DFATD
- Transition team and implementation team
Implications for the int’l dev sector in Canada

- Is the merger a bad thing?
  - In theory it could be a good thing
  - Depends: the detail is in the devil
  - Increased coherence for what?

- Is the proposed legislation bad?
  - No, actually it is not bad at all
  - Could be strengthened to check political agenda
  - But you cannot legislate political will
Implications for the int’l dev sector in Canada

- Further politisation of ODA?
- Greater blurring of the lines between diplomatic, trade and development objectives?
- Moving away from the use of generally accepted principles for development & HA?
- Weaker “CIDA”? Greater subsuming of development resources to trade and geo-political interests?
- Legislation and structure are mid to long-term changes!
CCIC members in action: the benchmarks and mobilization

Our key asks:

- Strong development and HA mandate which has poverty reduction at its core: preserve the ODA AA
- Level playing field: how will tensions between different objectives be worked out?
- Do not reduce delivery during transition – increase it!
- We need a principled policy framework for development
CCIC members in action: the benchmarks and mobilization

Our key collective actions:

- Working with others: academics, researchers, thinkers, the opposition, etc.
- Working with a critical mass of our members with an “open source” approach
- Insider strategy: accessing decision-makers
- Outsider strategy: mobilizing supporters and constituents
- Taking a long-term view on the impacts
CCIC members in action: the benchmarks and mobilization

Our achievements:

- Can we influence this government? Are they taking note that we care, that we can mobilize?
- Opportunity to communicate with public about ODA
- Opportunity to stretch and flex our muscles
- On some issues, we are naturally on the same page!
- Working towards a policy framework for 2015
- Working with others
We cannot do any of this without you... ..... Thank you!