EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC), representing 55 member organizations within the Atlantic (see annex 1), has responded to Minister Bibeau’s request for input into Canada’s International Assistance review. ACIC consulted with 85 individuals, representing a cross-section of our membership (academic institutions, CSOs, youth) and individuals from the global south.

Several cross cutting themes were prominent in the discussions. These included 1) Respect for local ownership of developing country priorities in setting the priorities for Canadian international assistance; 2) Strengthening partnerships in the delivery of Canadian assistance; and 3) Recognizing the significant role of small and medium organizations in establishing strong partnerships and their knowledge for sustainable outcomes on the ground.

The following is a snapshot of some of the key recommendations from each of the thematic areas. Further recommendations and examples can be found within the document.
Health and the Rights of Women and Children: Canada needs to increase efforts in understanding and addressing the barriers to gender equity and women’s empowerment, and should focus its assistance on working with local based organizations (in particular women’s rights organizations) and investing in economic development programs for women to create financial independence. Women need to be at the table at all stages. We also need to implement a feminist and rights based approach to improve the health of women and girls – this includes conducting a critical analysis of institutions and structures that affect inequalities and the development of strategies that address power dimensions in any development initiative.

Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change: In order to support developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change, Canada needs a clear and transparent strategy on climate financing, which strikes a balance between mitigation and adaptation. We also need to support leadership by CSOs to challenge government policies. While an ‘environmental lens’ needs to be applied to all international development assistance, some niche areas for Canada could include: negotiating good practice standards, investing in measurement tools, education and public engagement, CSO collaboration and research and development.

Governance, Pluralism, Diversity and Human Rights: Canada can help implement Goal 16 through evaluating accountability and inclusion in programs, and by supporting public engagement actions that promote peace and inclusion. Our priorities for international assistance should be rooted in local priorities to ensure country ownership of governance initiatives. We should consider supporting initiatives in the areas of transparency and fighting corruption. The promotion of inclusion, respect for diversity and upholding human rights includes supporting legislation that protects vulnerable communities in the global south, in particular those impacted by companies in the mining and extractive sectors.

Peace and Security: Canada can align its international assistance efforts with international approaches by re-engaging with the African Union, including sexual violence training for armed forces, making child and youth protection a priority and focusing on early intervention with children. We also need to strengthen our presence and become leaders in peace and security on the international stage. This will require much collaboration between security and development sectors. Finally, building trust with countries and people is key to achieving sustainable outcomes in this area.

Responding to Humanitarian Crisis and the Needs of Displaced Populations: Canada can best respond to humanitarian crises by directly involving affected populations in planning for short and longer term response. Our focus should be on supporting and partnering – not directing. The principle of local ownership and empowerment is also central in supporting the protection of vulnerable populations (women, children, people with special needs, sick and elderly) in crises, and strengthening respect for humanitarian principles. Finally, support (through funding) for human rights organizations and others is particularly important in protecting vulnerable populations.

Delivering Results by Promoting Innovation and Improving Effectiveness, Transparency and Partnerships: Global Affairs needs to establish predictable, equitable, flexible and transparent funding
mechanisms to improve delivery approaches. Innovation requires an end to silos and an openness to failure. Effectiveness must be about global development cooperation, not just aid. We need to be conscious of international agreements and agendas since the Paris Declaration, as well as of the principle of universality and the potential for mutual benefit in development cooperation. Development programming must be relevant and supportive of all types of organizations, including small and medium organizations.

INTRODUCTION

On May 18\textsuperscript{th} the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, launched the public consultation on Canada’s international assistance policies. The Atlantic Council for International Cooperation, representing 55 organizations and institutions in Atlantic Canada (see annex 1), welcomes the opportunity to contribute. This document contains the results of two consultations - the International Assistance Review High-Level Consultation organized by Global Affairs Canada and hosted by the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC) in Halifax, Nova Scotia on June 11\textsuperscript{th} and an ACIC-led webinar on June 22\textsuperscript{nd}. Both consultations drew a diverse representation from secondary and post-secondary institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), interns, other youth and nationals from the global South. It was encouraging to have one of the six High-Level Consultations that were part of the review process take place in Atlantic Canada, after several years of being on the periphery.

Five expert panelists delivered brief presentations on each of the thematic areas (see Annex Two for biographical details):

- Shawna O'Hearn, Director of the Global Health Office at Dalhousie University: Health and Rights of Women and Children.
- Catherine Abreau, Executive Director of the Climate Action Network Canada: Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change.
- Evelien Vanderkloet, Atlantic Regional Activism Coordinator of Amnesty International: Governance, Pluralism, Diversity and Human Rights.
- Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director of the Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative: Peace and Security.
- Brian Tomlinson, Executive Director of AidWatch Canada - Delivering Results: Improving Effectiveness, Transparency, Innovation and Partnerships.

There were 77 people present at the June 11th consultation. Participants were organized into nine parallel discussion tables dealing with one of the themes. Each table was assigned one of the themes with key questions to guide the discussion. A table rapporteur provided a summary of key points. On June 22\textsuperscript{nd}, ACIC hosted a webinar with 8 participants to gather more input from stakeholders representing universities, faith-based organizations, and small CSOs. The insights of both the table
discussions and the webinar have also been incorporated into this report. For the purposes of this report, these insights have been organized under the discussion questions where they best fit.

Several cross cutting themes were prominent in the discussions. These included 1) Respect for local ownership of developing country priorities in setting the priorities for Canadian international assistance; 2) Strengthening partnerships in the delivery of Canadian assistance; and 3) Recognizing the significant role of small and medium organizations in establishing strong partnerships and their knowledge for sustainable outcomes on the ground.

DISCUSSION OF THEMATIC AREAS

1. Health and Rights of Women and Children

Building on our commitment to a feminist approach and support for gender equality goal of Agenda 2030, where should Canada focus its international assistance efforts in this area?

Respecting issues of gender equality and employing a feminist approach, Canada must increase its efforts in working with local people and resources in areas where assistance is being provided. It is also key to work with to women’s rights organizations when possible. In all programs, understanding and addressing the social and economic issues that are barriers for gender equity and women’s empowerment is essential. Identifying structures for financial independence is often critical (e.g. income generating projects, micro-credit, savings groups). Women’s empowerment is positively correlated with economic development and is therefore key.

Canada should focus its international assistance efforts in the following ways:

- **Seek out organizations on the ground already doing the work.** While gender equity must be mainstreamed, the starting point is building and strengthening relationships with women’s rights organizations working on the ground.

- **Invest in economic development programs for women’s empowerment.** Canada can demonstrate new and continued leadership on women’s empowerment by supporting initiatives such as micro-credit programs and direct funding to women programming. Numerous examples were given at the consultation where such approaches resulted in stronger women’s voices in community.

- **Ensure that women are leading when developing, planning and implementing.** In mainstreaming gender equality in all initiatives, women need to be present, at the table at all stages.
  - Achieving gender equity requires leadership by women, and action by all. Ensuring a broad understanding of the relevance of gender equity within the home, community, and work is essential.
  - It is also important to include youth as a part of program strategies. Many mothers are teenagers and need to be targeted/reached out to as youth as well.

- **Call attention to rights for all genders.** Canada needs to focus on rights for all genders (including nonbinary), not just for women. This is an area where Canada needs to support work that is already being done internationally. Canada also needs to pay attention to respect for gender equity at home – modelling the behaviour it supports internationally.
• **View determinants of health in terms of holistic well-being.** The lens for health and women’s rights must build on the determinants of health to improve overall health outcomes and address global inequities. Whereas a biomedical models focus on the absence of disease and illness, a determinants of health perspective provides a broader framework for considering the factors that influence health in a community and alternative interventions.

**Advancing health-related SDGs to improve the health of women and girls, including adolescents, in particular their sexual and reproductive health and rights?**

**Implement a feminist and rights-based approach.** Encouraged by the language of a feminist and rights-based approach, attendees suggested this approach requires a) strategies that address power dimensions in any development initiative, and b) critical analysis of existing institutions and structures in reducing inequalities and leaving no one behind. Canada needs to ensure that approaches are inclusive, encompassing mothers and the children and youth they care for – regardless of gender.

**Build Programs from within local context.** Keeping in mind the need to listen and be responsive, efforts should be focused on creating and building programs from within the local context. Canada should collaborate with others to build on local solutions, local governance, cultural aspects, resources and capacities, as this approach will be more sustainable in the long term. We can support the solutions that women and youth from communities have identified, rather than bringing in teams from outside.

**Expand beyond MNCH.** Though Canada’s Maternal, Newborn and Child Health initiative can be applauded, efforts to achieve health-related SDGs must go beyond sexual and reproductive health and rights to include social determinants of health as noted. The lens of social determinants of health requires links with women’s role in governance, peace and security, impacts of climate change, and women’s overall health, resilience and vulnerability.

### 2. Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change

**Where has Canada added value in promoting clean sustainable economic growth?**

Climate change is arguably the biggest global problem. Canada has responded recently by committing to ambitious targets and steps to restore Canada’s reputation for environmental stewardship. Canada has had some small pockets of innovation in promoting clean, sustainable economic growth at the federal level, such as improving education in wind energy. At a sub-national level, cities and provinces have engaged with sustainable initiatives much more seriously than the Federal Government, experience we should learn from and apply to our international assistance for clean, sustainable economic growth.

Cautioning against framing ‘growth’ as an automatic positive value, GAC might take into account the work of ACIC member GPI Atlantic, which questions the growth/progress paradigm, with alternative perspectives on “progress.” Further, in terms of value-added, Canada should not look uncritically to the private sector, but give priority to the development of clean technology and priority to conservation over efficiency.

If Canada is to make greater contributions in the fight against climate change, Canadian scientists, especially at the federal level, need to feel secure to publicly present and debate their research. Publicly-funded research needs to be easily accessible, and scientists need to be free to speak based on evidence. Also, Canada needs a clear strategy on Climate Financing that addresses a balance between mitigation and adaptation. Canada has focused international assistance on mitigation in developing countries, but has made an insufficient investment in mitigation in Canada. Climate action in Canada
needs to be addressed simultaneously with assistance for mitigation and adaptation efforts overseas. Canadian legislation on climate change and clean energy needs to be strengthened – as a possible model for other countries to follow. Canada needs to make progress at home regarding climate mitigation and relations with indigenous peoples to have the credibility to lead on these issues globally.

**How can Canada support developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change?**

If Canada is to make greater contributions in the fight against climate change, Canada needs a clear and transparent strategy on climate financing that both meets our fair share in funding, and strikes a balance between mitigation and adaptation. To date, Canada has focused international assistance on mitigation in developing countries. An international strategy could draw upon much stronger efforts to promote mitigation and adaptation in Canada, including in Canada’s relations with Canadian indigenous peoples.

Canada can support developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change by supporting not only government initiatives but also leadership by CSOs to challenge government policies. For example, one third of Indian citizens lack electricity and the Indian government is planning to build coal-fired plants to supply that electricity. Canada should provide assistance to help India to leapfrog from coal to clean energy production. Further, Canada needs to strengthen the ‘environmental lens’ for international development assistance, i.e. restoration of stricter transparent environmental impact assessment policies for international assistance.

**Are there niche areas where Canada could further focus its international assistance?**

Though the need to apply a climate change lens to all international assistance efforts cannot be overstated, Canada can further focus its efforts in the following areas:

- **Standards for Global Climate Fund.** Negotiate good practice standards for allocation of funds from the Global Climate Fund to ensure maximum impact on reduction of carbon emissions.

- **Ecological footprint calculator.** Invest in developing a calculator that could measure ecological footprints at institutional, local, regional, and national levels, both in Canada and overseas. An ecological footprint and waste calculator would be a key tool for education and evaluation.

- **Climate change education.** Climate change education and ‘energy literacy’ needs to improve in Canada. Integrate climate change education into public engagement supported by GAC.

- **CSO collaboration.** GAC should also support innovative NGO to NGO collaboration, including between smaller organizations, connecting those facing challenges with those that have found solutions relating to climate change and a clean economy.

- **Research and development in formal and informal settings.** Canada can both contribute to and benefit from research into initiatives that are practical and sustainable. In Malawi, universities, for example, jumped to more sustainable clean and green energy by switching to powering most of the streetlights with solar panels. While research and development in an academic context is important, Canada can support initiatives such as science fairs for youth with insight, creativity and skill to develop innovative solutions toward a green economy.

**3. Governance, Pluralism, Diversity, and Human Rights**

How can Canada best help implement Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda—to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions?
A focus on inclusion encompasses consideration for people of all races, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations and socio-economic status. In its international assistance, Canada should support evaluation of programs to determine strengths and weaknesses in terms of accountability and inclusion.

Education must be an important aspect of support for inclusion, both in terms of curricula and in terms of ensuring access and support for those who may face ethnic, cultural or socio-economic barriers. Media also plays a large role in influencing society’s perceptions of particular individuals and groups, which can affect their access to justice. GAC should consider expanding support for public engagement actions in Canada that promote peace and inclusion in the types of stories covered and developing media literacy around international issues.

In what areas of governance can Canada’s international assistance have the most impact?

As stated earlier in the report, Canadian priorities should be rooted in developing country government and citizen priorities and to ensure country ownership of initiatives. Working with civil society organizations, Canada might consider increased support for initiatives in the areas of transparency and fighting corruption, being mindful of issues of national sovereignty.

Among potential avenues to support anti-corruption:

- **Allocate funding to organizations/commissions** that are independent and can play the role of a watch dog.

- **Work with locally-based grassroots CSOs** that have strong practices and interest in promoting transparency, who may be in a better position to respond to issues on the ground and to help transition to a model of local empowerment.

- **Support local, independent non-profit media in country.** Media create space for people to talk about issues, speak their mind, influence government, and raise awareness of people’s rights.

- **Assist in independent evaluation of results on the ground from the point of view of beneficiaries.** Corrupt local governments have the power to put pressure on local CSOs and governments by threatening to remove their support for a project or to refuse to conduct a proper and honest evaluation.

- **Find ways to include and engage diaspora communities more effectively in international cooperation.**

- **Some participants expressed concern about the human rights implications of an exclusive shift in focus to the poorest and most vulnerable, and supporting only fragile states.** Should it be exclusive? A high percentage of people live on between $1.90 and $3.10 a day, which may not be considered the extremely poor, but still indicates living in poverty. The concern is that focusing solely on the very poorest can ignore a portion of the population that is highly vulnerable in times of crisis.

How can Canada promote inclusion, advance respect for diversity and uphold human rights?

Atlantic Canadians consulted expressed concern that Canada was supporting mining in developing countries, in the absence of effective safeguards for human rights violations and remedial measures of accountability in Canada. There is evidence that the security of indigenous and vulnerable people around the world has been impacted by resource extraction by Canadian companies. This is a critical
aspect of human rights and security, especially for women and children who are often most greatly impacted by this industry. Global Affairs Canada should initiate and support legislation that can protect vulnerable communities from potential harm by mining and extractive resources. Canada has adopted Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations relating to the rights of indigenous people. GAC should take account of these recommendations in all areas to build stronger partnerships in the South that respect these rights.

In terms of promoting inclusion and advancing respect for diversity, Canada can:

- **Recognize the different forms of exclusion and oppression** and their intersection, in a way that facilitates understanding and does not alienate or exclude anyone.
- **Take care to not conflate women’s empowerment with maternal health.** There needs to be programs that focus on maternal health, programs that focus on women’s empowerment (and LGBTI+), and programs that focus on the two together.
- **Provide funding for access to legal aid and rights education.**
- **Pay special attention to Indigenous rights in Canada and abroad.** The ‘rights’ of Canadian companies should not be placed above the rights of people and communities. Canada should support the principles of free, informed and prior consent.
- **Develop and support vocational programs and job training** for access to fair and equitable employment opportunities.

4. **Peace and Security**

How can Canada align its international assistance efforts in peace and security with international approaches, including the 2030 Agenda?

Canada can align its assistance with international approaches in the following ways:

- **Re-engage with the African Union.** Canada is hesitant to commit military personnel; however, peacekeeping doesn’t always require huge numbers of people or putting people on the front line of conflict. Our police can play a role in implementing law and order. We can also build a pro-active system by building the capacity of the AU standby force, who could then be deployed quickly.
- **Integrate sexual violence training with other training for the Canadian Armed Forces.** Sexual violence is a huge issue in conflict situations. Training with other military forces can also include CSOs who work with communities to deal with the aftermath of sexual violence. Such training should be provided on-going so that it is received during earlier phases of conflict. The goal here is to change the way that people think about these behaviours.
- **Make child and youth protection a priority.** Conflict gives rise to and exacerbates various impacts on children and youth. Increased numbers of displaced people have led to an increase in child and teenage mothers. In a growing number of conflicts such as Nigeria, armed groups have been recruiting children and a large number of conflict-based victims are adolescent youth. Canada needs to see child protection as a priority and step up its response to early warnings.
- **Focus on making change through early intervention with children.** To impact new ways of thinking, one can’t wait until people’s attitudes about life have already been fully formed. If children grow up only knowing violence they are likely to continue on that path into adulthood, causing the violence to be a continuous cycle. This cycle needs to be broken by protecting the youth from violence and giving them the tools to build peace.
Timing is everything with regards to peace and security. In order to respond more quickly, Canada should work with the international community to monitor emerging situations more closely. As conflict is constantly evolving, we cannot afford to spend years on studies. We need to try our best to act, and if we fail we must learn from our mistakes.

**What strengths we can build upon?**

Canada used to play a significant role at the UN and until recently we had a seat and voice at the Security Council. Our diminishing international assistance, however, has had an impact on our effectiveness on the peace and security agenda.

We can strengthen our presence and input by building upon our history of being leaders around issues of children’s rights. Another one of our strengths has been partnerships to pursue innovative ideas and approaches to peace and security in development, including among specialized medium and small organizations from Canada and abroad. More attention should be placed on a diversity of actors in addressing increasing concerns for peace and security through our international assistance.

**What kind of international assistance partnerships should Canada pursue to achieve its peace and security goals?**

Building trust with countries and people is key to achieving sustainable outcomes in peace and security and sustained partnerships is an essential component of these efforts.

Canada should pursue or support partnerships, with different capacities and access to communities, between small/medium CSOs and government, and between small/medium and large Canadian CSO, including in the area of peace and security programming. There is a need to develop funding mechanisms that level the playing field and enable all organizations, regardless of size, to access funding based on capacity and expertise. GAC needs to recognize that supporting a diversity of types of organizations and approaches is the best way to encourage innovation and achieve results.

5. **Responding to Humanitarian Crises and the Needs of Displaced Populations**

How can Canada support needs-driven, effective and timely responses to humanitarian crises with predictable yet flexible support?

Canada can more effectively support humanitarian crises through needs assessments that directly involve the people that are affected. They should be involved in the planning and development of short and long-term responses, so that needs are met more rapidly and effectively. One step in doing this is to establish communications early on with community leaders and organizations with a history with the affected communities to get their buy-in and validation on steps going forward. Other methods of support include:

- **Consider direct cash disbursement in the immediate period of displacement/crisis.** Families and community leaders know what they need to get back on their feet in the immediate few weeks of adjustments. Several examples were given, such as in Vietnam, where people were displaced from coastal communities in anticipation of a major coastal storm, and where cash provided to women in households allowed them to purchase the things they needed to get back on track quickly in the first month. Direct relief helps build relations between different communities and supports local production and distribution.
• **Provide logistical and financial support to local NGOs/CSOs.** Local response actors should play more of a lead role in humanitarian responses, especially in humanitarian responses caused by natural disasters. In situations caused by war and conflict, local actors may not always be the best providers as they may be seen to be part of the problem.

• **Buy humanitarian goods and services locally as much as possible.** This builds long-term relations with local communities, local private sector, and local government providers in such areas as health, education, water and sanitation. It also facilitates local economic development.

• **Have refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) involved in the management of their new “living” environment.** Involve them in camp management structures as well as provision of products and services (e.g. food, shelter, health care, education). As was stated on the panel, on average people can be displaced into ‘temporary’ shelters for upwards of 17 years.

• **Offer support services such as food and medical care to communities around refugee and IDP settlements.** Often many of these local communities are living in difficult circumstances.

• **Build the capacity of displaced people in both short and long term humanitarian and IDP situations, so that they can return to their original communities or third countries of resettlement with new skills to expand their livelihood options.**

Predictability and flexibility should be primarily defined by local populations. They are themselves diverse and may change their understanding of, and needs in relation to these terms over time. In order to be effective and adaptable, funding and reporting mechanisms for CSOs must also be predictable yet flexible.

Better supports should also be given to government-supported refugees that are being resettled in Canada upon arrival. Likewise, more awareness/support to Canadians that act as hosts should also be provided. It was also noted that more support needs to be provided on the ground to 1) adjacent countries that provide immediate support to refugees/IDP such as Lebanon and Jordan and 2) Canadian processing centres in various refugee camps around the world.

**How can Canada better support the protection of vulnerable populations in crises and strengthen respect for humanitarian principles?**

In response to the question, it is essential to be able to effectively identify who the most vulnerable groups are in a crisis. Participants in this discussion group defined this population as being women, children (especially unaccompanied minors), and people with special needs, including the physically and mentality challenged, the sick and elderly. Given that Canada has a strong background in supporting the rights and the empowerment of women, this could be an area where we add value.

Though participants believe Canada needs to provide better resettlement supports in country and at global refugee processing centres, Canada can better support the protection of refugee and IDP camps in crises and strengthen respect for humanitarian principles by:

• **Embodying the principal of “local control and empowerment”.**
  - Respect local community knowledge, culture and leadership and resiliency of impacted groups. While they may be victims of a natural or man-made crisis, they should not be seen as victims. Where feasible, they should be involved in all aspects of planning and development of programs and services;
  - **Work with and through strong, effective local coalitions** that involve affected peoples themselves, local actors and other bilateral donors/INGOs
• Reinstating funding for vital human rights organizations. Previous government cuts of funding to organizations that have been fundamental in upholding the human rights of vulnerable populations have left a blemish on Canada’s reputation. Two of these organizations, mentioned by some participants, are the UN refugee agency working in Palestine and the OAS Inter-American Human Rights Commission that has become very important in impacts on communities of environmental issues and extractive resources.

To what degree can one link humanitarian responses to longer term peace and security development interventions?

Groups had two different views on this. On one hand, existing “embedded” military / security / humanitarian initiatives that aim at long-term development have not proven to be very successful in many crises situations. Long-term development processes, as part of a humanitarian response, should be led by displaced people themselves, their communities and local government and civil society actors. On the other hand, others supported a longer-term vision for crisis assistance, incorporating elements along a spectrum of humanitarian and development response, also driven by local interests and priorities.

Finally, the principle of local ownership and empowerment was noted as a subject on which to proactively mobilize Canadians, building on the spirit of domestic refugee resettlement. Just as community cooperation proved vital for resettlement of refugees in Canada, we should invoke the same principle in international crisis response.

6. Delivering Results by Promoting Innovation and Improving Effectiveness, Transparency and Partnerships

What concrete steps could Canada take to make its international assistance delivery approaches and mechanisms more efficient, effective and innovative?

More effective development cooperation

In keeping with the International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society Partnership Policy, Global Affairs should establish predictable, equitable, flexible, and transparent funding mechanisms. It must be recognized that the focus on a call-for-proposal approach over the past number of years has had a disproportionately negative impact on small and medium sized organizations. The consequence has limited the diversity of roles and types of CSOs in Canada and developing countries able to contribute to the achievement of poverty reduction and sustainable results. Furthermore, the heavy reliance on this mechanism has often strained organizations’ capacity at the proposal submission stage and resulted in funding gaps to support programming in the global South due to the protracted time-frame between initial call and funding approval.

Canada can make these mechanisms more efficient, effective and innovative by:

• Simplifying funding proposal, monitoring and reporting processes. The current practice of writing proposals and reports is complex and does not necessarily develop better outcomes nor is it the best way to measure results. It has become a bureaucratic exercise and a competitive way to determine who can fill in complex forms.
  o For developing country partners, donors could create common metrics for reporting. If donors can agree on a single list of priority indicators, this could be a step towards reducing the burden for country governments and partner institutions.
- **Allowing for diversity in proposal and reporting criteria.** Universities, NGOs, and churches all have their own niche in terms of styles of working and contributions to international assistance. The current application and reporting formats tend to require all CSOs to “reinvent themselves” to fit into one mold that align with funder’s specific visions in order to receive funding.

- **Make space for multi-disciplinary collaboration.** GAC should encourage groups to work in consortium when it allows for stronger overall programming, but a consortium approach should be optional, not required.

- **Have inclusive mechanisms for mutual accountability agreements with countries, not just governments.** Expand agreements we have already made and make them transparent so that the CSOs are aware of them and can participate. We should ask, “What is the mandate from the country in question?”

- **Be cautious about draining country expertise.** Issues of per diems and compensation affect the allocation of human resources for development. The UN, for example, sets a standard that governments and local CSOs can’t compete, draining them of their experts. The Canadian government can make sure that remuneration on the ground is reasonable and fair.

- **Provide stability in the form of long-term funding.** Instead of a six-month or one year outlook, it should be 5 to 10 years. Give stability so that it’s not always about chasing donor dollars.

- **Decrease donor duplication.** Every government wants their own results so they can take credit. Multiple donor demands lead to poor governance. Governments should further collaborate in order to reduce inefficiencies.

- **Pro-actively engage in multilateral and multi-stakeholder platforms to improve the effectiveness of Canadian development cooperation.**

**Communications**

Those working in the field of international development, including CSOs and government bodies, often don’t fully know what each other is doing, which means we are unaware of each other’s best practices. There are numerous examples provided by participants in the consultation.

There is a need for platforms to encourage greater cohesion and communication between and amongst CSOs, and with other development actors, both inside Canada and more globally. This is a role that can be shared between Global Affairs, embassies and umbrella organizations such as national, provincial and regional councils, as well as existing international fora such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. As well, the relationships between CSOs, the private sector and universities can and should be strengthened.

Canada can improve communications to make international assistance delivery more efficient by:

- **Providing information on how embassies and consulates can help CSOs** in relation to information on relevant events, technical assistance, or information on existing projects and partnerships. For example, where can one go for accessible information as well as cost-effective training on results-based management, goal-setting, inter-cultural effectiveness, etc?

- **Creating common, accessible and consistent platforms** where CSOs, the private sector and educational institutions and others can share research, stories on impact, find government information, and engage with Global Affairs Canada. We need to continue finding ways to bring research, policy and practice together to strengthen our capacities as a development actors.
• **Periodic Coordination on common themes.** The government can facilitate bringing Canadian partners together on common themes, working with established networks in Canada that can continue to partner with the government to support this work.

**How can Canada foster development innovation?**

Discussion participants found the need to ask “what do we mean by innovation in terms of development?” It can mean finding new ways of doing business, testing these new approaches compared with traditional approaches. The term 'mindful adaptation' was also suggested.

Canada can foster innovation in development by:

• **Adapting to changing contexts.** Development is not independent of the changing environment and thus the way we work also needs to adapt to the changing face of issues, as well as the changing environment in which we are working. It is important to convene different groups in Canada and in related countries for their perspective on how a changing environment affects existing approaches and partnerships.

• **Allowing room for failure.** Canada needs to be willing to take risks and continually assess the challenges and lessons from experience, including the possibilities for failure to achieve program objectives. The challenge is that organizations face barriers to taking risks due to funding requirements. Organizations face immense pressure from funders, including the government, to be successful at all times. There needs to be openness with funding agencies to allow room for trying new things - and possibly failing - with the objective of preventing similar failures in the future and finding best practices that lead to more tangible success in the long-run. Ways to allow room for flexibility include:
  - **Investing in testing piloting,** relieving the pressure to be “successful” at first attempt, but creating room to see what works and what doesn’t.
  - **Including an element of innovation in all funding and project proposals.**

• **Encouraging Collaboration.** Canada needs to invest in collaboration. Purposeful collaboration often encourages innovation, Government needs to provide money and resources to develop diverse and sometimes risky partnerships.

• **Creating consultant teams** that encourage those with different levels of experience and knowledge to collaborate would create a more balanced approach to innovation – it is critical to encourage innovation, but not at the expense of forgetting lessons learned.

• **Supporting the work of small/medium projects.** Small organizations, working to access different expertise in their constituency, can often be highly innovative and responsive. Innovation sometimes works well in small/medium projects because relationships and access to needed technical resources are more manageable and adaptable to the communities where they work.

Discussion participants also felt that in addition to finding new ways of doing things, it is also important to document and build on successes.

**How can we engage a wider range of partners to leverage the resources and expertise necessary to achieve the sustainable development goals?**

We need to move beyond projects towards long-term partnerships in which project may play a role, including the contribution of volunteers in many small and medium sized organizations. Global Affairs Canada must put into action the **International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Civil Society**
**Partnership Policy** as an approach to partnering with international, Canadian and developing country CSOs, and supporting an enabling environment for civil society in developing countries. We need to develop ways to measure good partnership in terms of not only the leveraging of resources, but in terms of achieving development impacts based on partner priorities.

**How can we enhance broader engagement of Canadians in our international assistance efforts?**

The Government needs to share with the population the impact of the current work Canada is involved in internationally. But more importantly government needs to support a diversity of civil society sponsored modalities of engaging Canadians, from exchanges and direct exposure visits to developing countries, learning processes, partnering with developing country organizations to share expertise, developing work with young people in schools and through CSO programs.

We need to target the younger population - high school students for example - and build their engagement over time and through programs such as ACIC’s Act for Global Change program, where youth selected from across the region and engage the public on global issues, among other examples of youth engagement through CSOs in the region (notably the Youth Internship Program).

We must continue to observe what youth and the public in general finds valuable, the ways in which they most actively engage, and in what areas they most passionately and consistently engage. Social media is has become an incredibly powerful platform over the last number of years. We can make an effort to be more present in these online spaces.

But this should not be the sole means of engaging youth or the larger public. In all approaches, we have to remember to engage with the purpose of inviting citizens to be active on global issues, and not to share information alone. There may also be a way to synergize involvement in international assistance with community service requirements.

The IDRC had programs specifically for bridging civil society organizations to work with academics. This is something that participants deemed valuable for public engagement and would suggest be re-instated. Participants pointed to the importance of expanding the work that organizations and institutions like the Coady International Institute do in terms of educational exchange, capacity-building, partnership building, and youth engagement.

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive public engagement policy and strategy from GAC, which addresses not only how we engage Canadians, but also why. Part of this strategy should include adequate infrastructure and a return to having a physical presence to link with the education system.

**CONCLUSION**

Throughout the discussion, there was a clear and consistent focus on local ownership and empowerment as the foundation upon which to build Canada’s approach to international assistance. Canada must seek out and listen to the interests of people living in poverty and who are vulnerable, who have good ideas and intentions to offer. In an era of universality, this work is less about leadership than partnership, and less about Canada’s operations than about cooperation.

To be more effective and inclusive in our partnerships, GAC needs to rethink the modalities for proposals and reporting. The current frameworks are lengthy, complex models that require specific understanding of the definitions of key terms e.g. targets, indicators, objectives, outcomes. Their
complexity can be excluding and time and resource-consuming. Proposals and reporting mechanisms need to be simpler and straightforward in order to invite diverse organizations who can be impactful.

In all areas, Canada needs to focus more on capacity building. In addition to being better listeners, we can be teachers, exchanging experience, offering insight, learning from each other and capacity. We then move away to have local partners carry out initiatives based on their priorities and knowledge.

Another strong theme that emerged during consultations is the need for government to increase support for small and medium-sized organizations as they are skilled at building partnerships with other CSOs and have a close ear to the ground, so to speak, in terms of issues and assets in communities.

Canada, as CSOs working with government, has notable strengths upon which we should build:

- Effectiveness in applying a rights-based approach;
- Ability to create solidarity active global citizenship in partnerships;
- Expertise in policing and peacekeeping;
- Involvement in policy development - Canada has played an important leadership role in developing key CSO policies and frameworks such as the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness;
- Demonstrated commitment and ability to advance a global agenda on maternal, newborn, and child health;
- A strong national narrative in the international response to refugee crises, most recently the Syrian refugee crisis; and
- Ability to mobilize youth in volunteering, experiential education and public engagement capacities.

Consultation participants encourage GAC to continue to focus on youth via programs such as the International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) and the International Aboriginal Youth Initiative (IAYI). Organizations who have implemented this program attest to the tremendous impact is has had on Canadian youth, Canadian public, and overseas partners.

Overall, participants in Atlantic Canada strongly welcomed this initiative to conduct this review. CSOs and interested citizens in Atlantic Canada are energized that Global Affairs Canada is making efforts to open the door for substantive discussion with Canadians. We encourage Global Affairs to build on our strengths, seek feedback from partners, align our efforts with previous agreements we have made, and to continue to ask “What have we learned? How can we do even better?”
Annex 1

ACIC Organizational MEMBERS

AidWatch Canada
Amnesty International
Atlantic Chapter of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
Breaking the Silence Maritimes- Guatemala Solidarity Network
Campbell Webster Foundation
Canadian Red Cross
Centre for Nursing Studies, International Office
Chalice Canada
CHAT to the Future Inc.
Children/Youth as Peacebuilders
Coady International Institute
Community Forests International
Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Cooper Institute
Dalhousie University, Faculty of Agriculture International
Dalhousie University, Global Health Office
Dalhousie University, International Dev Studies Department
Dalhousie University, International Research & Development
Development and Peace
East and Central African Association for Indigenous Rights
Falls Brook Centre
Farmers Helping Farmers
GPI Atlantic
International Development Education and Awareness Society (IDEAS)
International Sustainable Community Assistance
JustUs! Development & Education Society
Memorial University, International Centre
Mennonite Central Committee
Marine Institute International
Mount Saint Vincent University, International Projects Office
New Brunswick Community College
Nova Scotia Community College, Centre for International Activities
Nova Scotia Environmental Network
Nova Scotia Gambia Association
Oxfam Canada
Passages Canada
Saint Mary’s University, International Activities Office
Tatamagouche Centre
The United Church of Canada, Maritime Conference
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton Campus
University of PEI, International Relations Office
World University Service of Canada
YMCA Global Initiatives Committee Fredericton

Individual Associates

Bobby Thomas Cameron
Carolyn Brown
Catherine Baillie Abidi
Catherine Ronahan
Cristian Suteanu
Della Webster
Dennis Stuebing
Dolores Furlong
Dolores Levangie
Donica Larade
Donovan Taplin
Jean Fraser
Jesse Lalonde
Joan Campbell
Joy Hecht
Kimberley Douglass
Louise Webb
Lucas Panizzi Bregles
Mary Jane Harkins
Mary Rigby
Sajidul Haque
Sarah Mills
Sean Kelly
Taylor Quinn
Annex 2

PANELLISTS – June 11, 2016 Global Affairs High Level Consultation (Halifax, NS)

- **Shawna O'Hearn, Director of the Global Health Office at Dalhousie University - Health and Rights of Women and Children.**

  Ms. O’Hearn chairs a Governance Committee for the Board of Health Promotion Clearinghouse and co-chairs the annual Canadian Conference for Global Health. As the Director of Global Health at Dalhousie University, she has led the office to expand the global health framework to local partnerships focusing on social accountability, diversity and equity.

- **Catherine Abreu, Executive Director, Climate Action Network Canada - Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change.**

  Ms. Abreu advances policies that enhance Canada's investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy while phasing out the use of fossil fuels. She is the author of *Electricity and Nova Scotia’s Future: Hurdles and Opportunities* and worked with the Ecology Action Centre’s Energy Action Team to build the website Fossil Free Power 2030 (www.fossilfree2030.ca).

- **Evelien Vanderkloet, Atlantic Regional Activism Coordinator, Amnesty International - Governance, Pluralism, Diversity and Human Rights.**

  Ms. Vanderkloet helps deliver Amnesty's key campaigns in the Atlantic region and supports the work of members, volunteers, and student groups. She actively works to further Canada's role in development and human rights through building partnerships with other Atlantic-based NGOs.

- **Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director, Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative - Peace and Security.**

  Dr. Whitman has served as the Executive Director of the Dallaire Initiative since January 2010. She has conducted research on small arms and light weapons in Southern Africa, gender and conflict, children and conflict, the International Criminal Court, the Great Lakes Region, and peace and reconciliation efforts in post-conflict societies.

- **Brian Tomlinson, Executive Director, AidWatch Canada - Delivering Results: Improving Effectiveness, Transparency, Innovation and Partnerships.**

  A retired Senior Policy Analyst at Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), Mr. Tomlinson is widely published on Canadian international cooperation, with emphasis on policy issues related to international assistance. He is currently chair of the Monitoring Advisory Group, a group mandated to review the monitoring framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.