



**Hon. Beverly Oda, P.C., MP**  
**Minister of International Cooperation**  
**CIDA-ACDI**  
**Ottawa ON**

December 14, 2010

Dear Minister Oda,

As a Coalition of Canadian organizations concerned about ending global poverty, advancing human rights and maintaining the integrity of the earth's ecosystems, we are writing to commend CIDA for the inclusion of climate change considerations in the recently released *Sustainable Economic Development Strategy*. In particular, we support CIDA's commitment to sound environmental management as essential for the long-term viability of an economy, including appropriate response and adaptation to climate impacts.

We are concerned, however, that climate change adaptation is only marginally addressed in this and CIDA's two other previously announced strategies, despite climate change's importance to sustainable economic development, food security and to ensuring the health of children and youth. We believe CIDA's core strategies can be significantly expanded to incorporate *building the adaptive capacity of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized populations*, taking guidance from the DAC policy on 'Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Cooperation'.

Informed by our experience in adaptation and mitigation programming with developing country partners, we offer in Annex I a number of recommendations for strengthening adaptation programming within the Agency.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, or other members of your Agency to discuss our recommendations, and gain a better understanding of how climate change adaptation programming fits within the priorities of the Agency.

Sincerely,

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*Mr. Darren Schemmer, Vice President, Partnership with Canadians Branch*

*Attachments: Annex I – Recommendations for Strengthening Adaptation Programming within CIDA*

## Annex I

### **The Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development<sup>1</sup> offers the following recommendations for strengthening adaptation programming within CIDA:**

**Ensure a strong focus on climate change adaptation.** While both adaptation and mitigation are important, adaptation is the overwhelming immediate priority for the poorest and most vulnerable people. It is therefore essential that CIDA prioritize supporting adaptation initiatives in developing countries.

**Promote “mainstreaming” of climate change adaptation into CIDA’s programming.** Integrating climate change adaptation into poverty reduction programming is essential to increasing the sustainability and impact of development initiatives, especially in climate-sensitive sectors such as water, agriculture, livelihoods, and health. This also serves to ensure that development investments and outcomes are protected from the impacts of climate change.

**Contribute adaptation resources directly to the poorest and most vulnerable.** CIDA should ensure that the adaptation initiatives it supports take into consideration ‘differentiated vulnerability’ to climate change and the perspectives of vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, smallholder farmers and indigenous communities. Adaptation programs must be pro-poor and promote principles of gender equality and respect for human rights.

**Ensure adaptation initiatives support and promote principles of local ownership, collaboration, transparency and accountability.** As well, as adaptation is a long-term process, adaptation initiatives should be long-lasting thus allowing governments and civil society to engage in effective planning and implementation for the long-run.

**Support new initiatives in community-based adaptation (CBA).** CIDA should support new interventions where the primary objective is to improve the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change. Effective CBA requires an integrated approach that combines traditional or local knowledge with innovative strategies to address not only current vulnerabilities, but also people’s resilience to face new and dynamic climate challenges.

To effectively build adaptive capacity, CBA should incorporate four interrelated strategies:

- ✓ Promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods strategies in combination with income diversification and capacity building for planning and improved risk management;
- ✓ Disaster risk reduction strategies to reduce the impact of hazards, particularly on vulnerable households and individuals;

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<sup>1</sup> *The Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D) is a group of over 15 Canadian development and environmental organizations that joined together in 2006 to share knowledge and take concerted action to address climate change. We aim to build the capacity of the international development community to address the challenges which climate change poses to sustainable development, and to bring the voice of the international development community to the debate on Canada’s response to climate change.*

- ✓ Capacity development for local civil society and government institutions so that they can provide better support to communities, households and individuals in their adaptation efforts; and
- ✓ Social mobilisation to address the underlying causes of vulnerability, such as poor governance, lack of control over resources, and limited access to basic services and social safety nets.

**Support the creation and strengthening of an enabling environment for effective CBA.** CIDA's work with partners at the community-level should be coupled with efforts to inform regional, national and international policies and strategies related to climate change adaptation. This involves the generation of evidence-based best practices in CBA; strengthening local institutions to engage in key decision making processes related to adaptation; and linking community-based experiences to national, regional and international policy dialogues on climate change adaptation.

**Promote ecosystem-based adaptation.** Ensure adaptation measures support, rather than weaken the resilience and diversity of ecosystems.

**As funding for adaptation initiatives should be new and additional to ODA,** CIDA should ensure that its coding system is able to accurately capture climate change adaptation investments, and that these are accounted annually in CIDA's Statistical Report.