

# INTRODUCTION

## DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Government of Canada's longstanding commitment to alleviate global poverty is a direct reflection of Canadian values of compassion and generosity. Canada's development efforts provide essential assistance to the world's poor and create opportunities for developing countries to generate sustainable economic growth.

In 2012–2013, the Government remained committed to maximizing the impact of its aid dollars by ensuring that its assistance was focused, efficient and accountable. Among its many accomplishments, Canada continued to lead the Muskoka Initiative to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality, helped make education accessible to more than two million children, contributed towards global efforts to eradicate polio, and initiated new, innovative approaches to leveraging private sector capital to address global development challenges. This report highlights the work of 14 federal departments and agencies that helped Canada deliver development and humanitarian assistance to those most in need.

### **OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**

As part of the Government's ongoing commitment to ensure transparency and accountability to Canadians, the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* (ODAAA) came into force in 2008. The Act applies to all federal departments and agencies providing official development assistance (ODA) and requires the Government of Canada to report annually to Parliament on its development assistance activities.

The Act establishes three conditions that must be satisfied for international assistance to be considered official development assistance. Assistance must

- contribute to poverty reduction,
- take into account the perspectives of the poor, and
- be consistent with international human rights standards.

Canada's ODA advances the Government's foreign policy objectives: 1) increasing economic opportunity through international engagement; 2) mitigating security risks; and 3) promoting Canadian principles and values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Within the context of these objectives, and with an overarching goal of reducing poverty, the vast majority of Canadian international assistance focuses on five priorities:

- stimulating sustainable economic growth
- securing the future of children and youth
- increasing food security
- advancing democracy
- ensuring security and stability

These priorities are implemented by a number of federal government departments and agencies (see Table 1, page 4) working in close collaboration with partners in Canada and abroad.

### **2012–2013 HIGHLIGHTS**

The following is a sampling of ODA activities undertaken by the Government of Canada in 2012–2013:

- One of the worst food and nutrition crises ever to hit Africa occurred in 2012, affecting 18.7 million people in the Sahel region. The **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** was an early responder to the crisis, providing food and nutrition assistance to six million affected people in the region and treating 850,000 children suffering from severe malnutrition.
- Canada continued to be an international leader in improving the health of mothers, newborns and children. In Afghanistan, for example, CIDA increased its efforts to eradicate polio by contributing to the vaccination of more than seven million children.
- To combat chronic hunger and malnutrition, CIDA supported a wide range of global initiatives to help developing countries increase food security for those most vulnerable. In Ghana, where some two million people have limited access to food, CIDA exceeded its