



photo: CIDA-ACDI/Roger LeMoigne

Development success story: A laboratory worker at Medigloves Ltd. in Thailand, a country that has advanced from being a recipient of aid to becoming a full economic partner with Canada.

A good case study of the Canadian strategy on security and governance is in Afghanistan. Canada is active in the country on diplomacy, development and defence fronts—the so-called 3-D approach—in an effort to restore stability, support growth and help build democracy there. Canada contributed close to \$24 million to the Afghanistan presidential election last October, which was considered a watershed in the country's transition toward a democratic, self-sustaining state.

### Development partnership

Over the last 25 years, a number of Asian countries receiving assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have made significant progress. In Malaysia and Thailand, for example, health, nutrition, life expectancy and other indicators of human development have improved to the point that the countries are graduating to becoming donors in their own right.

"It's been a great success story, a shift from these countries being recipients of aid to becoming full economic partners," says Bob Johnston, Director General of Strategic Planning for Asia for CIDA. However, he cautions that there are still large pockets of poverty in the region. "The bottom line reality is that 60 percent of the world's poor live in Asia... Overall the numbers are still quite intimidating."

The tsunami disaster galvanized Canadians into focusing on the region in particular and on humanitarian assistance more generally, not just in times of crisis but for the long term.

"The crisis has presented an important opportunity for building relationships and solidarity among communities that should be supported," Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew told the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on the aftermath of the disaster in Jakarta in January. "The international community will need to remain engaged

in the region over the longer term... Canada will be there—as a full partner—for as long as it takes."

The tsunami was "a tipping point," says Paul Evans, Acting Director of the Liu Institute for Global Issues, "flushing money into the region on an unprecedented scale" and bringing international attention to deep-seated conflicts in countries such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia. "The seal is broken," he says, adding that the new eyes may bring new players and a new context for the internal issues.

### A role for Canada

How Canada should and can play a role more broadly in the region is a topic of intense discussion. In China, for example, it is important to make certain that Canada capitalizes on the country's tremendous economic growth, while ensuring that China is a responsible member of the international community. "Canadian commercial activities in Asia are only one part of the picture," Evans says. "I'm worried about the single lens that's being put on the relationship; we can't be active in Asia without a social, security and political focus as well as an economic approach."

Wenran Jiang, who worked on a dairy farm for five years during the Cultural Revolution and led student protests in Ottawa in 1989 against the Chinese government's actions in Tiananmen Square, says that Canada must work with the Chinese to try to have an influence on the country in a strategic way. A "spotlight approach," he says, will not work.

"There shouldn't be any question of whether we engage; the question is how we engage China," he says. "We can try to assert our influence effectively to help China be more open-minded, more of a society based

Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew surveys the tsunami damage in Phuket, Thailand, in January: "The international community will need to remain engaged in the region over the long term. Canada will be there—as a full partner—for as long as it takes."



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