

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Canada's development assistance programming has provided humanitarian support and promoted socio-economic development in India for more than five decades. Since India's capacity to diagnose development problems, prescribe solutions, and shape sophisticated policy is strong, development assistance has been very effective in helping India meet its vast and wide-ranging challenges. Reflecting this, and in response to a Government of India request, Canada decided in late 2003 to phase out its bilateral development assistance program, which will end in March 2006.

Canada's development engagement with India has evolved from a donor-recipient relationship to an equal partnership. The Government will continue to work with the Government of India and civil society partners in both Canada and India to meaningfully contribute to helping India meet its development goals. In particular, the Government will continue to use its multilateral and partnership programs to advance these goals.

The Government also sees this commitment to partnership as an important component of a broader effort to mitigate the impact on inter-communal tension on the lives of the most vulnerable. Canada recognizes that more work needs to be done and is aware of the unique challenges facing modern India. The Government remains committed to working with India in a useful and constructive way.

Growing Canada-India cooperation and dialogue is complementary to a rapidly growing Indo-Canadian community, now estimated to be near one million. India is the second largest source country of immigrants (over 24,000 in 2003) to Canada and this community is a positive, catalytic force in our relationship.

RECOMMENDATION 27

Recognizing the recent democratic progress made by Indonesia, notably in embracing pluralism, as well as its potential as a model for the rest of the Muslim world, the Government of Canada should continue to both encourage and assist the Government of Indonesia in emphasizing pluralism as a key element of its democracy.

As the world's most populous Muslim country and one of its largest democracies, Indonesia is a model for many countries. Indonesia has made significant advances in consolidating its democracy in recent years, as demonstrated by the success and transparency of its legislative and first-ever direct presidential elections in 2004. At the November 2004 APEC meeting held in Chile, PM Martin met with recently elected President Yudhoyono and discussed the successful presidential elections held in 2004.

The Government supports these ongoing reforms and the further promotion of Indonesia's democratic development and inclusive pluralism through development assistance and high level exchanges.

As a multicultural, geographically vast country, Canada has much experience in managing diversity to offer Indonesia. Recognizing this potential role, the Government has supported engagement by a number of Canadian experts on pluralism and respect for rights and freedoms,