

Canada's Development Assistance Program in the Commonwealth

Canadian official development assistance to developing Commonwealth countries is provided in many forms: bilateral assistance (government to government), multilateral assistance through the United Nations system, international financial institutions and Commonwealth institutions (principally the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation), and support for initiatives by Canadian non-governmental organizations and businesses working in Commonwealth countries.

The Canadian International Development Agency views the Commonwealth development programs as valuable tools in addressing the needs of developing Commonwealth countries and in pursuing Canada's ODA programming priorities in the areas of basic human needs; women in development; human rights, democracy and good governance; private sector development; and the environment.

Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-Operation

Within the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CFTC is the most important multilateral channel for development co-operation among member countries. With an annual budget of some \$46 million, contributions are provided by both developed and developing Commonwealth countries.

Canada is the Fund's largest donor after the United Kingdom, with a contribution of \$11.6 million in 1995-96. A Canadian currently acts as Deputy Commonwealth Secretary-General for Development Co-operation.

There are three main components to the operation of the CFTC: training, the provision of specialists, and the provision of technical advice. Following the priorities established by Heads of Government at Harare in 1991, the Fund is now called upon to provide assistance in a number of new areas. These include assistance in the transition to democracy, the pursuit of human rights, the promotion of equality for women, the management of economic change, and administrative reform.

For example, the Fund supports specialized training programs on gender planning in macro-economic policies, women's participation in policy and decision making, women's rights as human rights, women and AIDS control, and women and environmental management.

The Fund also provides experts in drafting legislation as well as assistance in the review and reform of electoral and constitutional law, and intellectual property law.