

overall official development assistance as soon as possible, as well as increasing the share of funding for activities designed to implement the *Platform for Action*. Furthermore, countries involved in development cooperation should conduct a critical analysis of their assistance programs so as to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid throughout the integration of a gender approach....

In 1995, the Canadian government reaffirmed its commitment to spending 0.7% of GNP on ODA by adopting the *Platform for Action* document.

Yet, in spite of this commitment, cuts to Canada's ODA budget mean that in 1997-98 Canada committed only .30% of its GNP to ODA, and that by 2000/01 ODA will be only .25% of GNP. This is a reduction of 40% in the ODA budget since 1991-92.

In 1995-96 CIDA committed \$52 million to Women in Development programming. This is 2.4% of the ODA budget or 3.2% of the CIDA budget.

Recommendations

The Canadian government:

1. Reverse cuts to ODA. Canada must begin to meet its obligation as a signatory to the Beijing *Platform for Action* to increase ODA to 0.7% of GNP (para 353).
2. Designate a larger proportion of Canada's aid to meeting the objectives of the Beijing *Platform for Action* (para 353).

■ Development and Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Recommendations

The Canadian government:

1. Carefully examine the assumptions and theoretical paradigm of development and Official Development Assistance (ODA). The existing global economic system based on "free" market principles and reducing the role of government in re-distributing wealth is increasing women's inequalities. So, while the Canadian government may genuinely support the *Platform for Action*, by promoting trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization, the government is promoting policies which adversely affect women. Canadian government policy is, therefore, contradictory.
2. Withdraw its support of economic globalization and trade liberalization as advanced in free trade agreements, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which promote "cheap labour" and the mobility of capital to the detriment of women.
3. Push for reform of the international financial institutions (IFIs) and the devastating structural adjustment programs they have imposed in the South, which have generated mass poverty, particularly among women and children. The Canadian government should support the early cancellation of debt of poor countries by calling on the IFIs to adopt new or adjust existing measures under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative to ensure the most generous provision of debt reduction to the most countries over the shortest time period.

