

ADVANCING DEMOCRACY



The development of free, well-governed and pluralistic societies based on human rights and the rule of law cannot happen without the full participation of people in decision-making and in the institutions that affect their lives. In 2015-2016, Canada helped advance democracy by supporting:

- strong and vibrant civil societies, independent media and Internet freedoms,
- free and fair electoral processes and institutions,
- effective legislatures and well-developed political party systems,
- women's political participation, and
- the continued promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law.

This focus is also evolving to include inclusive and accountable governance, peaceful pluralism and respect for diversity, and the specific rights of women and refugees. Global consensus was reached through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which recognizes that all of these are essential for sustainable democracies.

CIVIL SOCIETY, INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A healthy and vibrant civil society strengthens the ability of people to participate, hold their governments to account, and advocate on issues that affect their lives. Civil society organizations are crucial to achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development. Canada supports safe and enabling environments for civil society in developing countries and respects their rights of freedom, peaceful assembly and association.

In June 2015, the Canadian social justice organization Inter Pares concluded a five-year Burma Border Assistance Program project funded by Canada. Over 60 civil society organizations increased their ability to research and disseminate information on human rights, development and environmental sustainability.

From 2011 to 2015, through the National Languages Project implemented by Agriteam Canada, Canada contributed to post-conflict reconciliation in Sri Lanka by increasing awareness and support for language rights, bilingualism and linguistic diversity. Support was

provided to the initiatives of 13 civil society organizations. These initiatives, which promoted respect for linguistic and cultural rights, reached over 4,362 beneficiaries.

Canada is a strong advocate for freedom of expression internationally, and builds the capacity of media to report freely through the Internet and traditional media. Internews, an international NGO that supports independent media and access to information worldwide, launched the Strengthening Investigative Reporting in Ukraine initiative two years ago with Canada's support. This initiative supported what has quickly become the nation's pre-eminent investigative media program. Drawing on audiences from mainstream television, Web TV, YouTube and Facebook, the Strengthening Investigative Reporting in Ukraine television

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES

Developing and strengthening public institutions is a crucial aspect of development. Quality statistics are essential for making informed decisions to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. In 2015-2016, Statistics Canada provided support to national statistical offices in several developing countries around the world.

Statistics Canada's ODA activities are demand-driven. These typically include study visits where delegates spend time at Statistics Canada, improving their knowledge of statistical methods and practices or of statistical organization governance. In 2015-2016, countries that benefited from study visits included Senegal, Indonesia, Ukraine, Brazil, Turkey, Côte d'Ivoire, and Colombia, whose delegates participated in teleconference seminars. This training improved their understanding of various aspects of social, economic and methodological statistics, as well as corporate business architecture and organizational design.

In addition, Statistics Canada provided training in the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting through three regional workshops. Two were hosted in Santiago, Chile, by the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and a third was hosted in Shanghai by the Government of China. Statistics Canada is an active participant in the UN's Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which enabled Canada to bring essential statistical expertise to the development of global indicators for measuring progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.