

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

(2016 A&P, p. 314–15, 23)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Last year, the committee presented a brief report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that had been approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 to guide the international development agenda for the next 15 years. The MDG's encouraged both donor and recipient nations to rationalize development programs under eight key themes. As noted, Canada has become a leader in promoting Maternal and Child Health which has had significant and measurable impacts. There have also been advances in literacy and poverty reduction. However, there was criticism that, in general, the MDGs lacked measurable indicators, were not 'rights-based' and had an inadequate (too narrow) focus on women and girls.

In 2013 the UN initiated a process to review the effectiveness of the MDGs and prepare for the post-2015 period. The process would generate new goals based on broad consultation with community groups. This 'Global Conversation' covered 83 countries. Input was received from 800,000 people. The consultation document is called "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", better known as the Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030. There are 17 goals with 169 targets. These ambitious targets aim to end poverty; hunger; promote health and education for all; focus on human rights; good governance; environmental concerns, including climate change, clean water and sustainable agriculture. The Canadian Council for International Cooperation has written a helpful commentary called "Transforming our World: Canadian perspectives on the Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs)" The SDG theme is 'Leave No One Behind' and applies not only to 'developing countries' but all signatories of the 'Transforming Document,' including Canada.

There are critics who feel the SDGs are too broad and unattainable. Concerns are also being raised about resources, human and financial, to reach the goals. Many of these criticisms are fair but none of the goals is beyond reach if there is a consensus to move forward together as a global community.

Challenges for Canada

Canada has been reducing its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) for the past two decades. Today our ODA has fallen to 0.24% of our GNI, one of the lowest in the developed world. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee has recommended that donor countries set a target of 0.7% of the donor countries' gross national income for overseas development assistance.

When the Minister of International Development, the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, received her mandate letter from Prime Minister Trudeau, it included a commitment to create a new policy and funding framework to guide Canada's aid decisions, and to support the implementation of the SDGs.

Recommendation No. 12 (adopted, p. 23)

That the Moderator write to the Minister of International Development asking what the Government of Canada's plans are to increase ODA in the next three years.

Recommendation No. 13 (adopted, p. 23)

That the Moderator write to the Minister of International Development encouraging the Government of Canada to ensure that Canada's ODA policies are consistent with the values and goals of the SDGs.

Recommendation No. 14 (adopted, p. 23)

That congregations be encouraged to review the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) as a means of evaluating the conduct of Canadian development priorities.

Sustainable Development Goals information is online at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs.