



December 11, 2009

The Honourable Beverley J. Oda
Minister of International Cooperation
200 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0G4

Dear Minister Oda,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the membership of OCIC – the Ontario Council for International Cooperation – to ask you to review the decision made to cut funding to the development work of eleven Canadian churches and church organizations through KAIROS.

KAIROS has a strong reputation as a human rights champion committed to advancing the “voice” of the poor and dedicated especially to working on poverty eradication with some of world’s most marginalized people. As recently noted in CIDA’s Performance Report for 2008/2009, the Canadian Partnership Branch’s foundational goals are “to reduce poverty, promote human rights, and support sustainable development consistent with Canadian Foreign Policy”. KAIROS’ reputation in the eyes of the Canadian public, the testament of their international partners and colleagues, along with the findings of a recent CIDA-appointed evaluation of their programs and operations, confirms that KAIROS epitomizes these goals.

KAIROS’ 2009-2013 proposal to CIDA was developed under CIDA’s Voluntary Sector Program. According to KAIROS, it focuses on two of the five priority sectors: Promoting Good Governance and Advancing Environmental Sustainability. While the KAIROS proposal was developed under the criteria set out in the guidelines for proposals under the Voluntary Sector Program, it also shows results in the recently launched CIDA thematic priorities of increasing food security, stimulating economic growth and securing the future of children and youth. In addition, the KAIROS proposal embodies the principles of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Accountability Act. The Act legally requires Canadian ODA to contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspectives of the poor, and be consistent with international human rights standards.

On May 20, 2009, speaking at the Munk Centre in Toronto, you outlined CIDA’s commitment to focusing on the themes of food security, children and youth, and economic development. During this speech you also affirmed that “we cannot effectively implement these bilateral and thematic priorities while ignoring governance, the environment and equality between men and women....they will from now on be integrated into everything we do. And of course, we will also continue our work to promote freedom, human rights, and the rule of law”. We can see no better way for the Canadian government to demonstrate their commitment to human rights, the environment, and gender equality than to reinstate program funding to KAIROS. We strongly urge CIDA to reconsider its decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Gorman'.

Erin Gorman, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Dubelaar'.

Jessica Dubelaar, Interim Executive Director

c.c. Margaret Biggs, Mary Corkery, Gerry Barr