



CIEPAC

Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas
de Acción Comunitaria, A.C.

San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México, December 4, 2009

Minister Bev Oda
CIDA (Canadian International Development Aid)
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA

The Centre for Political and Economic Research for Community Action (CIEPAC) expresses our grave concern about the decision of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to suspend funding to KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, an organization with broad support within Canadian civil society that has for many years worked in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of Chiapas and Mexico with the aim to strengthen the instruments for them to exercise their human rights.

For more than eight years CIEPAC has been in partnership with KAIROS. KAIROS' support has been fundamental in the implementation of our Integral Human Rights program which consists of popular education, accompaniment of community processes, participatory development, development and distribution of educational materials and building capacity especially among the poorest and most vulnerable peoples in the state of Chiapas. KAIROS supports 20% of the budget necessary to implement this program and without this support the capacity to carry out the program will be severely affected. This will have a direct and immediate impact on the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples including the right to education, the rights to consultation and free, prior informed consent, and the right of these communities to participate in decisions and actions related to the development of their land, whether these be private or public initiatives.

We lament this decision of the Canadian government and we hope that you will agree to revise and change it. As partners of KAIROS, we presented a proposal that begins in 2010 and is included in the institutional program that KAIROS submitted to CIDA for 2009-2013.

We express our profound gratitude to and solidarity with the men and women who make up KAIROS and the Canadian civil society they represent.

Sincerely,

Miguel Pickard
Legal Representative
On behalf of CIEPAC staff