

Coalition of Canadian NGOs Petition Prime Minister to Urge Food Crisis Action at the G- 8 Meetings in Japan

A coalition of 18 Canadian non-governmental aid organizations have contacted Stephen Harper, urging the Prime Minister to make good on the promises Canada made two months ago with regards to the country's contribution to the global food crisis. In April the government announced major new funding for an important short-term response of food aid, but nothing more has been done since.

During the first week of July, leaders of the world's powerful countries will gather at the G-8 meeting in Japan to take action on the food crisis. The coalition is urging the G-8 to finally implement some long-term initiatives needed to stem the tide of the food crisis, including:

1. **Make Agriculture a Priority for Canada's Aid Program** – there is a strong global consensus that governments, both in developing countries and aid donor countries, have ignored the vital needs of agriculture in developing countries. Agriculture is both our main source of food and the livelihood of 60-80% of the people in developing countries. A clear focus on aid for agriculture is essential.
2. **Fix the International Food Organizations** – the three United Nations food organizations (The World Food Program, The Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development) and others such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research should be resolving the food crisis. But they aren't working well together. Canada supports all these agencies and should be leading efforts to integrate their efforts for the benefit of small-holder farmers and hungry people, especially during this food crisis.
3. **Make the International Trade Agreements Work for Small-holder Farmers** – the last two decades of forcing developing countries to open their food markets to imports have drowned millions of small-holder farmers in waves of often-subsidized cheap food imports. Trade agreements that Canada negotiates must allow developing country governments to protect their small-holder farmers.

*Canadian Catholic
Organization for
Development and
Peace*

*Canadian Council for
International Co-
operation*

*Canadian Foodgrains
Bank*

CARE Canada

*CHF – partners in rural
development*

ETC Group

Farm Radio Intn'l

Inter Pares

*Mennonite Central
Committee Canada*

National Farmers Union

Oxfam Canada

*United Church of
Canada*

*UPA Développement
international*

USC Canada

World Vision Canada

The Food Security Policy Group is a coalition of Canadian international development and civil society organizations seeking to promote policies and actions that protect and enhance food security in developing countries, based on decades of working in these sectors with partners in developing countries.

4. **Lead Efforts to Reduce Large Food Price Fluctuations** – Canada should lead efforts to reduce the increasingly great fluctuations in basic food prices. These are driven not only by speculators but also by the very small global reserves of food available to respond to even small changes in demand.
5. **Avoid Threats to Food Security Posed by Biofuel Development** – biofuel development that threatens to take away land from small-holder farmers for large biofuel plantations must be avoided. Canada should also support efforts to ensure that biofuel development doesn't disrupt food production, either nationally or globally.

Canada ranks among the wealthy countries in the world and Canadians have shown their deep concern about the current food crisis, not only for themselves but for the millions for whom this is a matter of life and death. We expect our leaders to show their leadership by acting on this urgent issue.

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