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If strategic infrastructure investment is so vital to Canada's development, why is Canada refusing to help developing countries with theirs?

Engineering Canada's Future

Foreign Policy Statement: A Ray of Hope for Infrastructure Investments



Canadian engineers can help bring clean water to the world.

At a time when developing countries are asking for support in the development of sustainable physical infrastructure, Canada's consulting engineers hope that the government will take advantage of its just-released foreign policy statement to re-establish balance in its international cooperation portfolio by reinstating funding for infrastructure investments in the developing world. Doing so will go a long way to address the priority needs of poor countries.

A Unique Opportunity to Make a Real Difference

The federal government's foreign policy review sets the direction for Canada's international aid. Unfortunately, it has missed an opportunity to specifically include investments in infrastructure as part of Canada's strategy to help developing

countries build their economies and reduce poverty. The government's policy paper, however, has identified at least two priority areas, health and environmental sustainability, that will certainly require investments in infrastructure if real progress is to be made. Moreover, by reducing to 25 the number of countries in which Canada will focus its assistance, it will be possible for Canada to allocate appropriate funds for solid long-term investments in sustainable infrastructure, which is the top priority of developing countries.

Furthermore, the government wants to be active in sectors in which Canada can add greatest value in the form of appreciable Canadian expertise. Canada has the engineering know-how to support successful sustainable infrastructure projects in developing countries. Consequently, Canada is in

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada (ACEC) represents the private sector engineering companies in Canada. Consulting engineering is a \$10 billion industry in Canada, with 30% of revenue coming from international work. The industry employs over 50,000 people.



Canadian Takes International Lead on Sustainability



A Canadian consulting engineer will be teaching the principles of sustainable development around the world through a sustainability seminar unveiled

in Toronto in March. John Boyd, P. Eng., a member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC), sits on the FIDIC Sustainable Development Task Force and is an expert on sustainability issues.

According to the Brundtland Commission of Sustainable Development, **sustainability, or sustainable development, refers to development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.** "In general," said Boyd, a past Chairman of the Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada, "there is a concern that the human race is loading the environment beyond its capacity to recover naturally. Perhaps more importantly, there is a social dimension that argues for the participation of stakeholder groups in projects of the type that engineers carry out. When we investigate the issues of sustainability we find out that every type of project that engineers perform has sustainability implications."

To ensure that future generations are able to fully utilize the resources we enjoy, John Boyd is doing his part.

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an enviable position to match the immediate needs of poorer countries with the Canadian engineering talent, expertise and experience.

Canada No Longer Supporting Much-Needed Infrastructure

In recent years, the Canadian International Development Agency has moved away from building poorer countries' physical infrastructure and from involving Canadians in international cooperation efforts. In fact, over the past 30 years, Canada has donated only 11% of its aid to infrastructure. At the same time, African leaders and international financing institutions have called upon the developed world to contribute to bricks and mortar projects, with the World Bank declaring that "Providing these basic infrastructure services will help cut extreme poverty in half by 2015 by bolstering the number of children in primary schools, reducing child mortality, improving the living conditions of slum dwellers, and enabling local businesses opportunities."

The Impact of DeCanadianizing Canadian Aid

Canadians have a role to play in international development, yet CIDA has recently been reducing direct country-to-country development assistance in favour of monetary transfers to international financing institutions and direct program support to governments, institutions and enterprises in developing countries. These new practices reduce Canadian involvement and visibility, diminishing our reputation for providing support where it is most needed. Canadians and Canadian NGOs bring well-regarded expertise to projects, as well as high ethical standards. A number of development organizations have clearly stated that the federal government should continue to use Canadian talent to support Canada's international cooperation goals and **leave the Canadian brand in developing aid.**

ACEC's Recommendations

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada, which represents the private sector engineering companies in Canada, makes the following recommendations.

- 1. At a time when developing countries are asking for support in the development of sustainable physical infrastructure, ACEC recommends that the government re-establish balance in Canada's international cooperation portfolio by reinstating funding for infrastructure investments in the developing world in order to address the priority needs of those countries.**
- 2. At a time when CIDA is shifting away from using Canadians in the delivery of its programs, ACEC recommends that the government take strategic advantage of the wealth of Canadian knowledge and experience in international development by using Canadians' talent and resources to support the government's international cooperation goals, to ensure the effectiveness and sound management of projects and to enhance Canada's presence in the world.**



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