

December 3, 2009



KAIROS URGENT ACTION: RESTORE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA) FUNDING TO KAIROS

On November 30, KAIROS received notice from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) that our project proposal for 2009-2013 had been declined. We were not given an explanation for this decision, other than that our program did not fit CIDA priorities.

Our 2009-2013 proposal was developed within two priority sectors of CIDA: promoting good governance (human rights) and advancing ecological sustainability (reducing the impact of climate change and addressing land degradation). It was approved at every level of CIDA before being declined on November 30.

This decision terminates a 35-year history of cooperation between CIDA and KAIROS and its predecessor organizations, and compromises the work of human rights and ecological integrity in the developing world. (For possible impacts on specific partners, please see the background materials below.) This decision also negatively affects the ability of Canadians to develop skills and knowledge in the exercise of their global citizenship.

Please call (or meet with) your MP to discuss this urgent matter. If you do not know your MPs contact information, look it up here:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

Please, respectfully and politely:

- Speak about your own positive involvement with KAIROS;
- State your grave concern about this decision;
- Ask that CIDA restore its long-standing relationship with KAIROS;
- Emphasize the impacts of this decision on global partners and our work in Canada;
- Ask them to call on CIDA to reverse this decision.

Please also write to the following persons to request a reversal of the decision:

Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, pm@pmo-cpm.gc.ca

Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, oda.b@parl.gc.ca Phone: 613-992-2792, fax 613-992-2794. *It is particularly urgent to get through to Minister Oda. Please use whatever method works for you.*

Margaret Biggs, President of CIDA, Margaret.Biggs@acdi-cida.gc.ca

Please copy your letters to KAIROS at info@kairoscanada.org

(see following pages for important background information on the issue)

Further Background Material to KAIROS Situation

Situation

- KAIROS submitted a 4-year program proposal to CIDA on human rights and ecological sustainability. The total program cost of the proposal is \$9,211,483 over four years (CIDA contributes just over \$7 million of that amount). This is consistent with previous levels of CIDA funding to KAIROS.
- On November 30, we received a call from CIDA informing us that our 2009-2013 program proposal had been rejected and that KAIROS would no longer be receiving funding from CIDA. We asked for an explanation and were informed that our program did not fit CIDA's priorities. This was the last day of an extension to our current proposal. No written explanation has been provided.
- This decision, if not reversed, would cut funds to 21 ecumenical and citizen's organizations in Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, and cut educational work that helps Canadians across the country to develop skills and knowledge in the exercise of their global citizenship.

Background

- KAIROS and its precursor organizations have been funded by CIDA since 1973.
- The KAIROS-CIDA 2006-2009 program received a positive audit report and an excellent evaluation. - KAIROS staff worked closely with global partners to develop the 2009-2013 program proposal which focused on human rights and ecological justice.
- It was submitted to CIDA in March 2009 and went fairly quickly through all levels of approval. KAIROS made all adjustments to the program requested by our program officer. - The proposal arrived on the desk of Bev Oda, the Minister of International Cooperation, in July 2009. It remained on the Minister's desk for five months.
- In September 2009, when our agreement had still not been signed, we were granted a two-month extension on our previous contribution agreement. During this time we received no communication from the Minister's office. On November 30, the last day of this extension, we received the phone call from CIDA informing us that KAIROS would not be funded.

CIDA priorities and human rights

- With the support of CIDA staff, and in collaboration with our partners, our proposal was developed within two priority sectors of CIDA: promoting good governance (human rights) and advancing ecological sustainability (reducing the impact of climate change and addressing land degradation). Our proposal was deemed by CIDA staff to be within CIDA criteria and priorities throughout the approval process.
- Our proposal places a strong priority on advancing human rights. States are obliged to protect, respect and ensure fulfillment of human rights. Canada is expected to collaborate to fulfill these rights, including providing international assistance for these efforts. Our proposal is one way in which the government can demonstrate that it is providing support to the fulfillment of rights around the globe.
- Our focus on human rights is completely consistent with the ODA Accountability Act which

came into effect in June of 2008. The act requires all Official Development Assistance "to be consistent with international human rights standards."

Impact of the decision

- This decision, if it is not reversed, will have a devastating impact on the work and well-being of our partners overseas, the hundreds of marginalized communities and the thousands of people who have benefited from their programs. Furthermore, it will decimate our education program in Canada, which enhances Canadian's commitment to international cooperation.

- KAIROS supports partners in countries such as Sudan, the Congo, the Philippines, and Colombia who face extreme human rights and humanitarian crises as well as political repression. Many of our overseas partners risk their lives for the work that they do. KAIROS' accompaniment, advocacy and education work with partners has saved lives.

- **In the Congo**, KAIROS funding means a women's legal clinic to address rampant gender-based violence will be established. Loss of this funding to our critical human rights partner, Héritiers de la Justice, compromises this critical work to fight rape as a weapon of war.

- **In Sudan**, KAIROS is working with Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and its members to mobilize greater action for democratic peace. The full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan is essential to ensuring that basic humanitarian, food security, livelihood needs of women and children and their communities will be met. Without KAIROS funding, the SCC will not be able to adequately pressure parties to implement this peace agreement. In a country with very weak civil society networks, SCC has been an essential voice in negotiating and implementing peace.

- **In Indonesia**, KAIROS, through CIDA, supports KONTRAS: The Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence. KONTRAS is highly recognized as a credible human rights organization in Indonesia and internationally, working specifically on human rights monitoring, documentation and advocacy. KONTRAS plays a lead role in ensuring the Indonesian government investigates past military abuses and compensates victims (and the families of victims) of human rights violations and military atrocities. Without KAIROS funding, KONTRAS will lose ground on the achievements made over the years in widening democratic space in Indonesia and will be unable to hold the Indonesian government accountable for national and international human rights covenants.

- **In Colombia**, KAIROS supports a grassroots women's human rights organization, Organizacion Femenina Popular (OFP), in Magdela Medio, a region that has experienced some of the worst human rights abuses in Colombia. The OFP now has a membership of 5,000 women in the region of Magdalena Medio and runs 22 women's centers, offering programs which include integrated community development, human rights of women, health and legal services, and education. In a recent letter the OFP appealed to Minister Oda to continue funding to KAIROS, *"so that our sons and daughters grow up without being recruited by armed groups, kidnapped or assassinated - so that they have the right to a dignified life."*