



PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE

ON

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BY

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL ON AFRICA (CCAFRICA)

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SENATE OF CANADA
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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Senators,

The Canadian Council on Africa (CCAfrica) is very pleased to have been invited to make a presentation today. We thank you for this opportunity.

CCAfrica is dedicated to become Canada's leading private sector organization committed to the economic development of a modern globally competitive Africa. Our mission is to facilitate and promote sustainable increased trade and investment between Canadian and African private and public sectors, according to appropriate corporate social responsibility (CSR) guidelines, for the mutual benefit of all.

Our members (140) come from the private sector, the institutional sector such as universities and colleges and governmental agencies at both federal and provincial levels. All have the same objective and believe firmly that the economic development of Africa is the answer to many of the difficulties faced by many of the 53 countries on the continent. We fully subscribe to the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals). These goals must be ever present in our mind and we must keep working towards a stable and healthy population. But at the same time, it is our belief that they will not alone achieve the economic development required for the 750 millions people concerned. Of equal importance, if not more, emphasis must be given to investments, trade of all kinds, private sector development, know-how transfers and natural resources management in

order to ensure growth, jobs creation, political and social stability, a better environment and improved governance in Africa.

We believe that Canada is not playing its full role in Africa. In the last year we have completed two important studies: **“Unleashing Canadian Entrepreneurship in Africa”** and **“Facilitating Business Travel to Canada, Making Canada competitive in Africa”**. Both studies have already been presented to members of the Government, and you have received copies of these reports.

As another reference, we would also like to bring to your attention a report published by a group of departments and agencies from the Federal Government following Round Table discussions held in Ottawa on September 8, 2005. The report is entitled **“Dialogue on Africa - Focus on Investment and Trade”**. Interestingly enough, most the recommendations made at this forum, where more than 60 people from the private and public sectors participated, are very similar to those we published in our report three months before.

We don't intend to talk about each recommendation of the first report **“Unleashing Canadian Entrepreneurship in Africa”** but we will highlight the most important ones.

We state that the Government does not have a coherent and comprehensive strategy on Africa. It is interesting to note that the lack of such strategy was also a major concern expressed by the Blair Commission last June in Gleneagles: “...it is Heads of Government that can demand the necessary coherence...” The Government has an aid strategy and it was well spelled out in the policy document, but there is no clear policy statement and no reference to export credits to Africa; to the importance of natural

resources management, to agriculture, to international trade or to the overall presence of Canada on the continent. It is clear for CCAfrica that a strategy is strongly needed to effectively ensure coherence and efficiency: recommendation 3 demands that the Government develop such a strategy. Let me give you a couple of examples of reasons why.

Why would the government of Canada plan to double its aid to Africa and the same time close embassies and offices?

Why would we reduce our trade resources when the trend among the other G7 countries is to increase them?

Why would we reduce our resources on the continent when in 2006 it is expected that more than 25 African countries will see their GDP increase by more than 5%; the top 3 in the world being African countries?

When compared with the BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India and China - the Sub-Saharan Africa region ranks 1 or 2 on Investment, Aid, Merchandise and Service export! As you can realize these facts puzzle us and our members don't understand the lack of consideration for Africa and the absence of a coherent and comprehensive strategy.

The second important element of the study promotes the idea of a strong partnership between the Government and the private sector: Canadian universities; colleges; small and large companies are unanimous on this question. The lack of collaboration and partnerships between the private sector and the government are hurting the Canadian interests on the continent. The private sector - and we include CCAfrica in this category

- universities and colleges want to be part of the implementation of the Canadian government policies and programs in Africa. This is less and less the case as we speak.

The third group of recommendations emphasizes the importance for Canada to harness Canadian know-how, expertise and experience. But before I go into some of the main points on this section, let me site you a short quote from the Australian White paper on the Overseas Aid Program: "Australians deliver over 80% of the aid program. We use Australian expertise, our experience and our resources to tackle poverty. Every year AusAid awards Australian firms hundreds of contracts for good and services. Typically, at any one time AusAid manage more than 1,800. "If I was to redo this quote with Canada in mind; the numbers would be reverse: 80 % would become 20% and 20 % would become 80 %. This comes from Australia, the country, Canadian were told very recently, we should mirror!!

We need a better approach to design and implement our aid programs. We are not advocating a return to the tied aid approach. We are saying that the Canadian Government programs should find ways and means to ensure a larger role for the Canadian society to participate. Other countries make sure that their citizens do, why not Canada for its citizens.

The second report "**Facilitating Business Travel to Canada, Making Canada competitive in Africa**" deals with the difficulties of African business visitors to obtain entry visas: we decided to do this research following a great deal of dissatisfaction expressed by both Canadians and Africans. It was a demanding task for an organization such as CCAfrica with very limited resources.

As you may have noticed in the report, we made quite a lot of critical observations: the quality of the services provided certain policies and practices that should be revised and possibly improved. We also proposed a number of ideas that, if implemented; would improve the situation. In a few words, the 13 recommendations of the report deal with creating speed; creating predictability and consistency; creating access, creating expertise and translating ideas into actions.

As you can see; we have much to discuss. We can summarize our thoughts by putting forward a few questions:

1. Does Canada need an Africa Strategy that would take into account not only ODA but all aspects the economic development of Africa?
2. Do Canadians have the necessary tools to be competitive in Africa?
3. Does Canada have appropriate and sufficient resources in Africa to support Canadian efforts?
4. Even in the context of untied aid, is it reasonable to expect the Canadian society – companies, universities, colleges, NGOs - - with strong expertise and long experience to play an active role in the implementation of the Canadian programs in Africa ?
5. Do large transfers of funds from Government to Government help improve efficiency and improve accessibility by local proponents to Canadian ODA?

Thank you

Delegation

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