

Statement of the Canadian Delegation
Philippines Development Forum
March 30-31, 2006, Tagaytay City, Philippines

Canada is pleased to participate in the Philippines Development Forum and commends the Government of the Philippines and the World Bank for the excellent meeting preparations and arrangements.

Canada appreciates the continued use of the more inclusive and interactive format which has enhanced the dialogue on key policy issues and established a prioritized list of actionable items for support by various stakeholders. The participatory and broad-based composition of the forum is expected to contribute to increased transparency and accountability of decision-making.

Canada is providing support to the **Working Group on Decentralization and Local Government** through funding a coordinator for the working group and relevant studies for use by the working group. We are pleased with the progress and the momentum that has been generated by our modest assistance. We encourage other donors to consider providing similar support for the other working groups, as this approach has proven to be effective in assisting Government partners to take a stronger leadership role in directing support for jointly set priorities, enhancing coordination and monitoring progress.

Canada is also actively participating in the **Working Group on Growth and Investment Climate** and looks forward to this working group becoming more active and productive. In particular, we are seeking ways to collectively support the operationalization of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Plan.

We see these PDF working groups as a key mechanism for working collaboratively in striving to achieve **Paris Declaration** targets. Canada strongly supports progress on harmonization and alignment and the commitments identified in the Paris Declaration. Our program priorities are closely aligned with the Philippines medium-term development plan which is focused on increasing economic opportunities, maintaining socio-political stability and promoting good governance.

The CIDA Philippines Program has placed a strong emphasis on improved coordination and harmonization, as we adopt a more focused and integrated approach to program planning and management. It has recently undertaken a joint planning mission with AusAID and collaborated on country analytic work towards the harmonization of capacity development programs for local governments. Our programming has also directly supported the strengthening of the government procurement system which will accelerate the readiness of the Philippines to pursue and implement program-based approaches (PBAs).

Canada has also supported the development and dissemination of the '**Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation**'. These guidelines provide donors and implementing agencies with a common tool to mainstreaming gender equality in all stages of the project cycle. CIDA support to the Government's gender mainstreaming efforts largely prepared Government's (NEDA and NCRFW) readiness to take ownership of these

guidelines. We call on all donors to support the Government in promoting the utilization and application of these guidelines.

Canada recognizes that economic growth is necessary to reduce poverty. However, inappropriate economic development can lead to harmful environmental effects. The CIDA Philippines Program has therefore placed increased attention on the integration of environmental considerations in project development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. We have promoted the use of the Philippines environmental assessment process in lieu of the Canadian system in project planning. We stand ready to support efforts towards the harmonization of environmental assessment processes.

Canada is likewise fully committed to supporting local ownership and strengthening country capacity to administer and deliver development programs. Canada will consider all appropriate vehicles for the delivery of development programming, to include both government institutions and local civil society.

It is clear that the Paris Declaration targets will require collective and concerted efforts of donors and partner countries. Canada will remain in dialogue with the Government and other donors to explore opportunities and examine options towards meeting our partnership commitments, including the eventual use of program-based approaches, as appropriate.

Canada is taking a more focused approach to our future governance and private sector development programming. Governance programming is now being focused primarily in public sector institution building and capacity development at the local level, and, whenever possible, purposely linked to lead to local economic development. Private sector development programming, meanwhile, is now being focused on strengthening sectors and promoting entrepreneurship. Opportunities for collaboration between governance and private sector development programming are being actively pursued so that opportunities to strengthen the business enabling environment are seized upon wherever possible and private sector support is used to encourage and support governance reforms. Canada is also planning for its future support to the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women to focus on the economic empowerment of women and to be closely connected to our other governance and private sector development programming.

Possibilities exist to work with other donors in order to build momentum for local governance and decentralization as well as small and medium enterprise development in the context of the working groups' priorities. These opportunities will be actively pursued and we will ensure that Canada's development programming will be guided by the outputs and recommendations of the working groups.

Statement Delivered by the Canadian Head of Delegation
At the Plenary Session

I would like to join the others in expressing the Canadian delegation's thanks to the Government of the Philippines and the World Bank for the fine arrangements and meaningful agenda for this Development Forum. I have made the journey from Canada to participate in this important process and to show support for this inclusive and participatory model of consultation based on active working groups.

We are pleased with the progress and the momentum this process has generated and look forward to the sustained engagement by all stakeholders. As we all know, there is a need to focus the agenda of the working groups on priority doable actions whose progress can be monitored and reported on in the next PDF and whose results directly benefit the target population.

I am also here to ensure that the CIDA program is aligned with government priorities and, to the extent possible, is harmonized with other donor initiatives. Canada is committed to continuing to participate and contribute to sustaining the momentum and progress of the working groups.

As a small gesture towards this, CIDA has funded a coordinator for the Working Group on Decentralization and Local Government which has proven to be useful and effective in directing support for jointly set priorities, enhancing coordination and monitoring progress. We suggest this could be a useful mechanism for the other working groups. We encourage other donors to commit resources to support the effective functioning of the working groups as well as to the substance of the WGs. As such, we are considering providing the same coordinator support to the SME subgroup of the Growth and Investment Climate Working Group.

Canada welcomes the progress in the peace process between the Government and the MILF. The forging of a peace agreement and the implementation of a reconstruction and development program in conflict-affected areas will certainly contribute to more lasting peace and development in Mindanao. We are pleased to have contributed to the first phase of the Multi Donor Trust Fund. CIDA will continue to have an active presence in Mindanao.

As a general comment, Mr. Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the call of the ODA GAD Network for all donors to support the Government in promoting the utilization and application of the 'Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation'.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that CIDA's focus and long track record in supporting poverty reduction in the Philippines through our work in local government and decentralization, and in SME development to improve economic opportunities for the poor, especially women; that these areas of focus remain relevant and on target. We see our participation in the PDF working groups as a key mechanism for working collaboratively in strengthening aid effectiveness and, together, in achieving meaningful results.