



**Supplement to the document:
Talking points for meeting with your Member of Parliament**

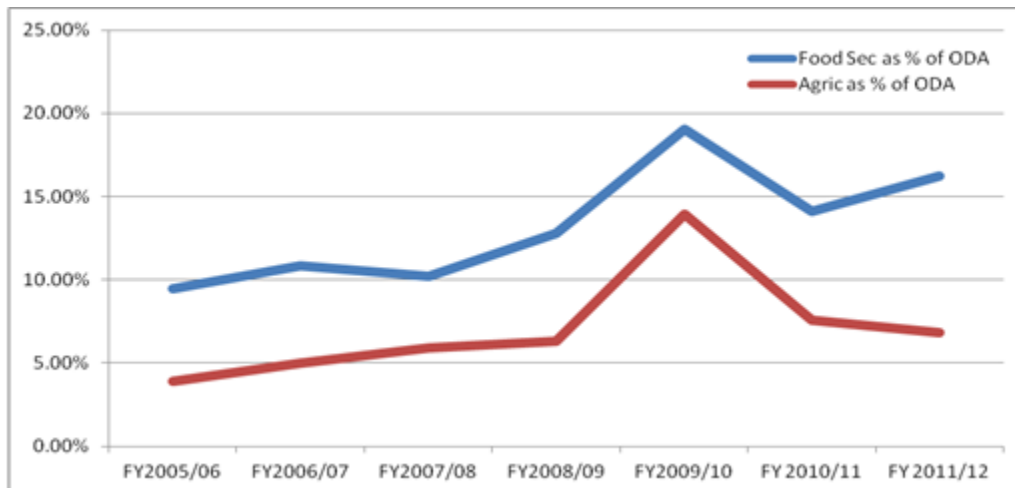
Why is it important to adopt international aid policies that support small-scale farmers and especially women?

In many countries of the Global South, the majority of people are small-scale farmers. These farmers are also the majority of people who suffer from food insecurity in the world.

Small-scale agriculture not only provides much of the food they eat and the food sold in local markets; it also provides the bulk of their income, which is used to cover household costs for education, health and food between harvests.

Despite increasingly wide recognition of the essential role played by women in agriculture worldwide, they often lack access to and control over the range of resources (land, labour, water, credit, etc.) that they need to sustainably increase food production and their income.

Increasing global food security is one of the Canadian government’s three priorities in its international aid program. The government also recognizes the importance of small-scale agriculture. Despite this, assistance for agriculture has tended to decline since 2009 within the government’s food security priority.



Source: Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGFB)

As well, the merger of CIDA and DFAIT raises some questions. When trade is merged with international development, it is important to question whether the economic interests of Canada or the interests of the people living in poverty in the Global South will prevail when we determine the priorities for international assistance to agriculture.

It is therefore important to put pressure on the Canadian government to continue to support this sector by increasing its funding and programmes in support of small-scale farming, especially for women farmers.

Sources: http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/working_groups/2012-04-23_%20food_strengthening_canada%27s_contribution.pdf

Why is there is a need to strengthen the consultation process with small-scale farmers?

According to an evaluation led by a coalition of Canadian NGOs, “farmers, farm organizations and other civil society organizations in developing countries often have little opportunity to share their own concerns or give feedback on their own government’s initiatives.”

However, Canadian law requires that we take into account the views of beneficiaries in planning aid spending.

According the same evaluation, “regular consultation between CIDA and smallholder farmers, either directly or through CIDA’s partners, could improve program design, delivery and ownership. It could also build the capacity of farmers’ organizations to engage with their own governments, paving the way for stronger civil society participation and improved governance.”

Source: http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/working_groups/2013_07_19_Fertile_Ground_FSPG.pdf

When it comes to respecting the rights of small-scale farmers, why is it important to target not only international aid, but also all policies and programs put forward by Canada?

Once again, what is at stake is the issue of the primacy of Canada's commercial interests versus the interests of communities in the Global South who are trying to lift themselves out of poverty.

This question must be asked in particular in when negotiating international trade agreements, because measures taken by other ministries could undermine the benefits achieved through Canadian development assistance.

For example, the adoption of certain trade agreements and international conventions such as UPOV '91 can undermine the right of farmers to save, use, or exchange seeds¹.

“It is important that Canada analyzes the possible implications of its international actions on smallholder farmers, and that this analysis informs its positions in key fora dealing with issues of trade, energy, climate change and the environment.

For example, there are cases where Canada’s promotion of agricultural exports may conflict with the objectives of the Food Security Strategy.

Also, Canada’s poor track record in international climate negotiations does little to address the concerns of farmers in many countries, who identify climate change as a serious risk now and into the future.”

Source: http://www.ccic.ca/files/fr/working_groups/2013_07_19_Fertile_Ground_FSPG.pdf

¹ For more information and examples of this, read this document by GRAIN: [Trade deals criminalise farmers' seeds](http://www.grain.org/article/entries/5070-trade-deals-criminalise-farmers-seeds), <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/5070-trade-deals-criminalise-farmers-seeds>.