

ACTION  **CANADA**

Building Leadership for Canada's Future

Policy Perspectives

Opinion Articles
by the 2005/2006
Action Canada Fellows

Introduction

Communicating relevant, timely opinions and ideas to the general public is an important skill for leaders interested in implementing or changing public policy. That's why Action Canada works closely with Fellows to enhance their skills in writing op-ed pieces worthy of publication in national newspapers and magazines, where they appear opposite the publication's main editorial commentary.

Broaching controversial opinions that can persuade the public and initiate action is an art. During our 2005/2006 program, we brought in eminent Canadian journalists and editors Andrew Cohen, Graham Fraser, John Fraser, Roy MacGregor, Fazil Mihlar and Barbara Yaffe, who discussed commentary writing and provided Fellows with feedback on their initial ideas and efforts. Action Canada writing mentors Dr. Mark Winston, director of Simon Fraser University's Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue, and Dr. Antonia Maioni, director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, further honed the Fellows' writing skills.

The result? Some of the Fellows' op-ed articles were published in major Canadian newspapers. Others are being submitted. In these pages, I am pleased to present all of their pieces. They clearly express how this group of emerging leaders views many of the major issues facing our country.

Cathy Beehan
Chief Executive Officer
Action Canada

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I lost a special friend and family member a little over a year ago.

Nicole Cox was one of thousands reported missing after the Asian tsunami. Her death will never be comprehensible, but our grief and that of so many others could have meaning if a clear strategy emerges to ensure that Canada will mobilize and respond more effectively to future natural disasters.

You may have read about Nicole in the tsunami's aftermath, a particularly poignant story since her husband James survived the same wave that took her.

Nicole had a great sense of humour. We still chuckle at her antics as the maid of honour in our wedding video, and at the collage of pictures she made for my wife with the title "Best Cousins Always" etched on it. Her spirit remains in an e-mail she sent weeks before the tsunami, telling us that she could not have been any happier than she was then, travelling around the world with James.

The Boxing Day tsunami claimed over 270,000 lives. Nineteen of these people were Canadian citizens, but thousands more had connections to Canadian relatives and friends. Obviously, the events marking the anniversary of the tsunami are over, but our sense of loss is not.

Individual Canadians and NGO organizations responded with strong and immediate compassion, but our government was disorganized in those first few days and weeks. The federal government displayed mixed signals over the funding Canada would be contributing officially, and hesitation on deploying the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART).

Canadians were frustrated to see our national government scrambling when lives were at risk. Are we not the world's "boy scout," ready to help whenever and wherever the need arises? That myth was shattered when we realized how severely our rapid response capabilities had been hampered by years of cutbacks to defence and international aid.

Disasters cannot be prevented, but their damage can be reduced. A recent article published in

Canadian Public Policy by Dan Henstra and Gordon McBean stated that a "changing climate, more people and property at risk, increasing economic and technological interdependence and environmental degradation ... are converging to increase the likelihood, magnitude and diversity of disasters in years to come." The capacity to respond quickly to major natural disaster could become one of humanity's greatest tests over the next decades.

The capacity to respond quickly to major natural disaster could become one of humanity's greatest tests over the next decades.

Canada's history of leading international humanitarian initiatives, including peacekeeping missions, negotiation of an international landmines treaty and establishment of the International Criminal Court, compels us to act. Tragic events in other countries have particularly profound impacts on Canadians because our countries of origin are so diverse, and ongoing relationships with those back home remain deep and extensive.

Canada could assert leadership by hosting the next United Nations Conference on Disaster Reduction, and putting the development of a coordinated international strategy for rapid and effective disaster response on the agenda. This conference could specify appropriate roles for key United Nations institutions, national government bodies and non-government groups from around the world; and develop a clear set of responsibilities in the first few hours, days and weeks after a major disaster has struck.

Further, we should support creating a new United Nations entity to coordinate disaster relief efforts. Even the normally polite Red Cross stated recently that rivalries between hundreds of groups too often lead to duplication, waste and delays in aid reaching those affected.

Canada also needs to increase our own military's

capacity to intervene rapidly and effectively. Experts writing in Robert Greenhill's book *Making a Difference? External Views on Canada's International Impact*, suggest creating a new force that could be sent into a disaster-afflicted region and investing in C-130J airplanes with heavy lifting capacity.

Another practical option is to expand the DART and augment it with personnel from other federal organizations such as Health Canada, Environment Canada and the RCMP.

It was encouraging to see the new Conservative government commit itself to creating a tactical airlift fleet, a new airborne army battalion and an expanded DART. Only time will tell if these commitments can be achieved.

Nicole's remains were finally identified in April and returned to her Nova Scotia home. She was buried in a private ceremony after a beautiful memorial service in her family's church.

The best legacy for Nicole and all who perished would be for Canada to commit our reputation, financial resources and organizational capabilities to develop a stellar and rapid response capability to major international calamities. This should be seen as a Canadian trademark, in place for when the next inevitable natural disaster strikes.

Individual Canadians continue to exhibit unbounded generosity and compassion in the international arena, and the government of Canada should do no less. With a new government forming, now is a good time to remember our global obligations.

Published in the Halifax Chronicle Herald on February 18, 2006.

Wade AuCoin

Convinced of Atlantic Canada's enormous potential for development, Cape Breton native Wade AuCoin returned there after his studies in commerce at the University of Ottawa. For two years, he worked for La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (The Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia) in the Chéticamp region, where he helped many community organizations establish cultural, technological and tourism projects. Relocating to New Brunswick to complete a Master of Public Administration at l'Université de Moncton, Wade has carved out a role for himself in the policy unit at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), where he works as a policy analyst in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders on publication of a variety of reports on the region's economy, the development of industrial strategies, and the preparation of information for senior officials in the Government of Canada.

Declining voter turnout in established democracies has been particularly evident in Canada. The statistics are telling, and frightening. Canada ranks 47th among 58 democracies, with voter turnouts hovering around 60-65 percent.

And our voting future looks even grimmer. Not only are young Canadians voting less than older Canadians—38 percent of 18-24 year olds compared to 80 percent of those over 58—but they also are voting less than their peers in comparable countries.

Why do so few young Canadians vote?

I asked some young Canadians about their voting habits, suspecting the answers might reveal a general indifference to politics. Most seemed to be well-engaged with issues, and offered other explanations for their failure to vote.

Youth in my mini-survey were reluctant to vote if they didn't have enough information to make wise decisions, if they felt their issues were not being addressed, and if they felt their vote wouldn't make a difference.

Shauna, a 24 year old administrative assistant from Vancouver, explained that she didn't vote in the last federal elections because "I didn't know anything about any of the parties and I felt like I would just be guessing." Similarly, Courtney, a 28 year old musician who has never voted, asked, "What's the point? My vote wouldn't make any difference. It would just be wasted anyways since the party I would vote for doesn't have the slightest chance."

Tara, a 22 year old student living in Calgary, explained her non-participation by saying, "I didn't hear anybody talking about any of the things that matter to me." And Alice, a 20 year old activist was troubled by the fact that while she often heard youth referred to as "the leaders of tomorrow," politicians "didn't seem to get that young people have contributions they want to make now."

Low youth voter turnout isn't a new phenomenon, but politicians and parties are not responding successfully. All three major political parties had

policy proposals in the 2006 election related to post-secondary education and to creating employment opportunities for young Canadians. Still, virtually all the young Canadians I spoke to were unaware that these proposals even existed.

Perhaps the more salient question is why politicians and parties don't expend more effort engaging young Canadians, promoting youth oriented platforms and making sure that potential young voters have the information they need. The answer is glaringly clear: with so few young people turning out to vote, there are more fruitful ways to focus limited campaign time and resources.

Institutional solutions involving electoral reform need to be considered, and imposed, on what has become a dysfunctional electoral process.

Experts suggest that increasing civic education and encouraging greater effort on the part of political parties and elected officials would engage more young people. They recommend solutions such as introducing mandatory civics courses into the school system or requiring candidates to direct part of their campaign resources towards youth. These initiatives might help, but institutional solutions involving electoral reform need to be considered, and imposed, on what has become a dysfunctional electoral process.

Electoral reform involving some degree of proportional representation (PR) could help address our poor youth voter turnouts. PR makes every vote count, both for could-be voters and for those who seek our votes, because the proportion of seats a party wins reflects the proportion of votes it receives.

Young Canadians need to be convinced that the act of voting means something, or they won't bother. Under our current electoral system, too many votes count for nothing at all. The share of seats a party wins generally does not correspond to

the share of votes received, leading many voters to conclude that their votes are wasted and many non-voters to decide not to bother voting at all. Electoral reform involving PR would ensure that every vote counted.

Proportional representation also would make every vote count to those who court our support, political parties and candidates. Parties currently align their policies with the interests of older Canadians who are more likely to vote. Under a PR system, parties who ignored the issues that mattered to young Canadians, and failed to engage youth by providing appropriate political information, would suffer repercussions at the ballot box.

André Blais, professor of political science at the Université de Montréal, noted in a recent article on youth voter turnout that PR has an appreciable effect on turnout in established democracies. The World Policy Institute confirms that voter turnout is higher in countries with PR. Even so, Blais is “skeptical” as “we lack a compelling explanation for why PR fosters turnout.”

We should not underestimate the impact of our political institutions. Embedded in our institutions are underlying incentive structures. Reforming our electoral system would put in place an incentive structure that encourages parties to do the work needed to address the principal causes of youth non-participation.

Institutional change alone is unlikely to boost youth voter rates to the levels we hope for. Other innovative ideas have been advanced to address the lack of youth electoral participation, including lowering the voting age, introducing Internet voting, and civic education in schools, and these should be explored.

But electoral reform should not be overlooked. There is too much to lose by not tackling the challenge with all the tools we have. Nothing less than the quality of our democracy is at stake.

Chiara Barazzuol

Chiara Barazzuol is passionate about engaged citizenship. She is committed to positive social change both at home and abroad. Long fascinated by the process through which historically marginalized groups become empowered, Chiara’s academic studies and extensive field research in Latin America have allowed her to explore the agents and conditions for social change. She has worked with indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Guatemala, served as a Minds Matter mentor while living in Harlem, facilitated anti-oppression workshops for the Vancouver Status of Women, advocated for fair trade through Café Etico, and served on the board of Co-Development Canada. Chiara is now actively involved in Canada25, a non-partisan organization that brings young Canadians’ ideas to the nation’s public policy discourse. Chiara is a committed public servant who has worked as a policy analyst at the Privy Council Office, Department of Finance, and Treasury Board Secretariat. She is currently based in Vancouver, working as a strategic advisor at Environment Canada. Chiara holds a BA from the University of British Columbia and a MA and MPhil in political science from New York’s Columbia University.

Stephen Harper should follow that old Tory tradition of prudent environmental management

To demonstrate a personal commitment on climate change, Conservative MPs recently switched to renewable electricity to power their homes. Their leader is purchasing power from a wind farm operated by none other than Greenpeace. Did this really happen?

This brazen act did occur. Not in Canada, however. It is part of an effort to reinvigorate climate policy by the rising British Conservative party.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's threat to withdraw from Kyoto is not only at odds with 80 per cent of Canadians, it is out of step with conservative counterparts around the world. Climate change cuts across the economy and increasingly across party lines. Mr. Harper should take his cues from conservative leaders ramping up, not shutting down, climate programs.

The British Tories are working to establish cross-party solidarity on a climate plan. "To get effective action we need to suspend normal politics, find agreement wherever possible, and commit to robust long-term policies which can survive electoral cycles," said Peter Ainsworth, the environment critic.

Germany's new conservative chancellor, Angela Merkel, just established an ambitious program to comprehensively upgrade energy efficiency in old houses and buildings. The move will cut electricity bills, greenhouse gases and air pollution, and create green jobs across the country.

Last spring, California Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases to 80 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. California will develop the world's most stringent building and appliance standards, tougher automobile regulations, and significant new renewable energy.

"Many people have falsely assumed that you have to choose between protecting the environment and protecting the economy. Nothing could be further from the truth," said Mr. Schwarzenegger.

US President George Bush is an anachronism on climate change. His plan involves voluntary targets and the hope of breakthrough technological solutions in the distant future. Last month, five Republican former Environmental Protection Agency directors admonished the US administration, calling for mandatory regulations and international targets.

Richard Nixon's EPA chief, William D. Ruckelshaus, said, "This is a major disaster for the world. To say we'll deal with it later and try to push it away is dishonest to the people, and self-destructive." White House resistance will likely fade given that Republican and Democrat frontrunners for the next presidency are climate advocates.

It is in our self-interest to act. More than half of Canada's economy depends on a stable climate.

If Mr. Harper turns toward Mr. Bush, as the Conservatives have suggested he will, he will be turning his back on a growing international responsibility, isolating Canada on the world stage and forfeiting some valuable diplomatic capital.

In a country with a spotty environmental record, Canada's Conservatives have a reasonable track record tackling international environmental issues. Despite damaging some environmental protections under free trade, Brian Mulroney was still our greenest prime minister. He coaxed the United States into stepping up the fight on acid rain. He signed the Montréal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances and set up a national plan leading to their virtual phase-out. His government also negotiated the original UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Today's Conservatives share Reform roots. Reform helped put cutting the deficit on the national agenda. Mr. Harper repeatedly said that spending more than we have will unfairly burden future

generations. The same logic and tenacity should be applied to climate change. Today, we have a much more serious threat to future generations and a much more dangerous deficit: a carbon deficit.

Every year, we burn growing amounts of oil, coal, and gas, adding more carbon to the atmosphere than can be reabsorbed by living matter in our oceans and forests. This massive carbon debt hanging in our atmosphere is trapping heat and changing the climate upon which we depend. As a carbon emitter, Canada is the third-largest per-capita and seventh-largest overall in the world. The original climate treaty signed by Mr. Mulroney, to which we are still bound, recognizes that countries that contributed most to the problem should act first.

It is in our self-interest to act. More than half of Canada's economy depends on a stable climate, from forestry to farming, fishing to tourism, and hydro power to shipping. Under business-as-usual forecasts, Canadians will confront more intense heat waves and smog episodes. The Inuit are threatened with the loss of a culture tied to a cold climate.

With all its limitations, the Kyoto Protocol is still the only agreement with a hope of moving the world forward with the commitments necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. Mr. Harper's "made in Canada" climate plan does not have to be inconsistent with Kyoto. Kyoto provides countries with the flexibility to tackle climate change in their own way. Meeting the targets will nevertheless involve some combination of federal regulations and fiscal policies employed right across the country, not voluntary measures. Mr. Mulroney demonstrated this with the Montréal Protocol's implementation plan.

Protecting future generations and our current prosperity can happen under today's Conservative government. Stephen Harper should look at the best conservative traditions, new and old, to balance our carbon budget, not the worst.

Published in the Ottawa Citizen on February 8, 2006.

Alex Boston

Alex Boston is dedicated to building an economy that meets people's needs while protecting the natural systems upon which all life depends. He works with non-profits, businesses and co-operatives to apply his creative appreciation of communications, politics and sustainability. Alex was senior campaigner for the David Suzuki Foundation Climate Change Program where he led policy and legislative work nationally and internationally. His recent work included policy development and strategic guidance for the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility and Mountain Equipment Co-op. Alex has managed campaigns and communications for the Council of Canadians, and worked in community development and leadership training in Asia, North America and Eastern Europe. Alex is currently at Oxford University as a Chevening scholar studying public policy, industrial innovation and sustainability. When not working to protect the climate, he loves to enjoy it in and around rainforested Vancouver, his hometown.

What is public policy? Two distinct groups of concerned citizens are regularly forced to confront this question: scholars and the parents of policy advisors.

My father is one victim of this question. When the thoughtful residents of our hometown of Gravenhurst ask him about his eldest son's occupation, his panic begins. He keeps a biographical scrap of paper in his wallet for just these moments. This single torn sheet of paper contains my vital statistics: address, phone number and, most importantly, my job title.

My father has demonstrated immense strength over the years. "Policy Advisor," he answers with a hesitant smile. The inquisitor retorts, "Okay, but what does your son actually *do*?"

With all of these years of university education, why couldn't I have chosen to become a lawyer or an architect? That would have made my parents' lives easier. Instead, I chose to be vague. I chose to work in public policy.

Textbooks and case studies written to explain and evaluate public policy inevitably begin with the same question: What is it? Many scholars prefer a 1972 definition from Joseph Dye: "Anything a government chooses to do or not to do." Right, that adds clarity. The carpenter down the road is even less impressed, and my father even more embarrassed.

Locksmiths and carpenters are accustomed to tangible results from their work. At the end of the day, the carpenter has built a wall made of wood. Too often, policy officials build walls made of words.

Civil servants are the class foremost engaged in policy-making. According to Statistics Canada, over 2.5 million Canadians work for some level of government. However, not all civil servants make policy. Some issue driver's licenses. Others manage sewage effluent. The federal Department of Health

employs hundreds of policy advisors. The Town of Gravenhurst is unlikely to have even one.

Those who work in public policy are sometimes recognizable by their appearance. Often they are dressed in suits. Increasingly, policy wonks can also be spotted in fleece vests emblazoned with a government logo on the upper breast. Accessories are also in style. The latch-key-kid look is in, displaying a mandatory security pass suspended from a thick shoelace that is stamped with an event brand or government logo.

It is the language of public policy—used by advisors, analysts and academics—that exacerbates the vagueness of this field.

Perhaps those who work in public policy can provide greater clarity about what it is that they do. I hold little hope. Unfortunately, many policy practitioners and scholars only serve to further obfuscate understanding. They maneuver clandestinely like counter-espionage operatives intent on undermining the agents of clarity by substituting memos and briefing papers for pistols and knives.

It is the language of public policy—used by advisors, analysts and academics—that exacerbates the vagueness of this field. Some call this Ottawa-speak. Sadly, this distortion of language extends far beyond the Imperial City. Variant dialects are also spoken in Halifax, Winnipeg, and Victoria. You might as well include Québec and Iqaluit. French and Inuktitut are not immune to the spread of *bureaucratise*.

For two years I worked as a policy advisor in Iqaluit. I slowly learned that I would have more success in government by learning the language of bureaucracy rather than the language of Inuit.

A must-know term in the policy world is 'stakeholder.' Not to be confused with a neutral

observer, as was the original linguistic intention, a stakeholder is an interested person or organization. It replaces the more legalistic ‘citizen.’ Stakeholders have interests. Citizens have rights.

A room full of ‘key’ stakeholders is called a ‘consultation.’ This is a mandatory exercise for government agencies planning a course of action. Decisions made by stakeholders during consultations contribute to ‘governance.’ Reformers and civil society groups argue that governance is more democratic. The term governance is not to be confused with government. Governments are elected.

Other terms favoured by those who speak the language of public policy include: capacity building, vision, and empowerment. It is no wonder that citizens have become disengaged from government.

Citizens in all parts of the country recognize that the current language of public policy does not reflect innovation or leadership. The purpose of public policy is to devise solutions for our collective problems. The current language of government is jargon, the language of management. It is the language of ease and control. To restore confidence in government, public policy must return to a language that my parents can understand.

David Brock

David Brock is the son of two pioneering families from Gravenhurst, Ontario. He is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Western Ontario. His research focuses on the influence of expert knowledge in public policy. This program of study is part of a larger research project with ArcticNet, a Network Centre of Excellence. David also sits on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Political Science Association. He holds degrees from Dalhousie University and the University of Saskatchewan. For two years, David lived in Iqaluit and worked as an advisor in the Government of Nunavut cabinet office. More recently, he lived in Ottawa operating his business, Circumpolar Consulting, which advises on public policy and intergovernmental relations. Previously, he has worked for organizations that include Frontier College and Bethune Memorial House. Most recently, he has volunteered as an educator with Students-On-Ice. Last year he accompanied students to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Montréal, and participated in the 2005 SOI expedition from Iceland to Greenland to Nunavut.

“Trade not Aid!” went an oft-repeated development slogan of the last decade. But with the announcement last week of a new task force on “Aid for Trade” at the World Trade Organization, it is becoming clear that trade may not be so easily divorced from aid. As a donor member of this 13-country task force, Canada has a key role in determining how the two could best be married.

The emergence of Aid for Trade at the WTO’s biennial Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong last December signals a recognition that targeted aid could help the WTO achieve its goal of lowering barriers to world trade. Despite the good intentions of this novel approach, there is no guarantee of a harmonious union.

Aid for trade is a catch-all phrase for development assistance that helps low-income countries produce, trade and negotiate. Examples include building roads, setting up computerized customs systems, or training new trade experts. It is needed because many of the poorest countries have struggled to obtain global market opportunities due to their inability to produce or export competitively, or to fully engage in trade negotiations.

Poor trade-related infrastructure such as dysfunctional ports, roads and telecommunications can add up to 40 percent to the cost of overseas-bound products in many sub-Saharan African countries – a high price to pay if you’re an aspiring exporter in, say, Mali or Uganda.

If they cannot shepherd goods to the world market, these countries stand to gain little from any improved market access resulting from the WTO’s current round of negotiations, which have been dubbed “the Doha Development Agenda.”

While the Doha talks are designed to dismantle barriers to trade in agriculture, manufactured products and services, the round also aspires to improve the lot of low-income countries. Ministers are aiming to conclude by the beginning of next year.

With 2007 only months away, the pressure is on at the WTO to show how it can live up to its promises to its poorest members. Because developing countries account for over three quarters of the WTO’s membership, their support will be needed for a final accord. Failure to ink a deal would rebound most heavily on the biggest traders such as the US, the EU, Japan and Canada.

Which is why the largest trading powers came to Hong Kong with their wallets open. At the Ministerial, the US announced it would more than double its aid for trade contributions, to \$US2.7 billion annually by 2010. The European Union and Japan announced similar commitments.

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To the extent these funds are new, and not just old promises in new packaging, the aid for trade initiative is to be welcomed. But when well-intentioned aid gets mixed up with the power plays of the WTO, a strong note of caution is in order, and many want to know what strings are attached.

Development groups have accused donor countries of using aid for trade as a means to buy off opposition to their own protectionist trade policies – such as exorbitant agricultural subsidies – through outright bribery. Some future recipient countries have called aid for trade a ‘smoke screen’ to smuggle in other issues that do not benefit them. Other critics warn that the funds on offer could evaporate if the Doha talks fall apart.

The cold reality is that aid for trade may well be the price the rich world has to pay to bring its low-income partners on board. Questions abound. Can aid be de-linked from negotiations? Are the amounts pledged sufficient, and directed at the right areas?

Despite the various objections, the aid for trade card is now on the table. It must be played wisely if a successful development outcome is to be achieved. Time is of the essence: the Aid for Trade task force must make its recommendations by July, so recipient countries will have to move quickly to spell out their conditions.

Some have already begun. Rwandan Finance Minister Paul Manasseh Nshuti has noted that aid for trade must not prejudice recipient countries' positions in the negotiations. More money from the big players is no substitute for credible improvements in market access for developing country exports: any aid must come over and above gains achieved in the negotiations.

The process should also involve some hard number-crunching. If developing countries stand to lose out from dropping tariffs without receiving benefits from better access to export markets, then aid for trade must at least be able to fill the gap.

Canada has a key role to play in making aid for trade work. In addition to the task force, Canadian diplomats are heading discussions at the WTO to improve the effectiveness of trade-related capacity building for the organization's 32 least-developed members. For viable solutions, they will need to listen closely to these countries.

We will also need to open our own checkbook to help close the deal. While our government has welcomed increased commitments in aid for trade from others, it has held back from fronting up itself. This hurts not only our credibility as a donor but also our long-term interests. As a highly trade-dependent country where one job in three depends on exports, we benefit immensely from an open, rules-based trading system. Achieving a successful Doha round by helping to make the system pay off for all developing countries can only help our own economic prospects.

Should we fail to find a way for the WTO to benefit poor economies, particularly when the round has worn its development aspirations so prominently on its sleeve, our trading partners in the South would have every reason to walk away from a final deal. Such a debacle would leave our

exporters high and dry—and the Doha Development Agenda little more than an embarrassing oxymoron.

Published in Embassy: Canada's Foreign Policy Newsweekly on February 22, 2006.

Hugo Cameron

Hugo Cameron is committed to tackling what is arguably our generation's greatest injustice—the disparity in economic opportunities between North and South. “Enhancing the ability of developing countries to move up the development ladder is imperative for the future peace, prosperity and sustainability of Canada and all other countries,” he says. Hugo began his career as an officer with the Canadian Forces, where he developed and conducted training programs on leadership and music for youth across Canada (he is now on supplementary reserve, holding the rank of Captain). After obtaining degrees in international relations (BA, McGill; MA, SFU), Hugo directed projects and publications on trade policy issues with the Geneva-based International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) from 1997 to 2004. He subsequently worked with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Tanzania on preparations for trade negotiations with the European Union. Currently with the Toronto-based International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty (ILEAP), Hugo is implementing a program to maximize development outcomes from trade negotiations for countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. He believes the Action Canada fellowship offers an unparalleled opportunity to promote excellence and leadership by building relationships with forward-thinking individuals across the country.

Recently, as I was shopping for a new car, my wife suggested we explore other alternatives that would reduce our ecological footprint. It seemed a very reasonable thought. Why not act on our environmental beliefs through our consumer habits? In other words, why not put our money where our virtue was?

So we looked at other alternatives such as public transport, car-pooling, local shopping ... only to come to the conclusion that our professional and personal circumstances wouldn't allow us to be without a car. Never mind, we thought, we can still do our part to save our children's future: we would go hybrid. Rising gas prices also weighed in: we could take on Big Oil with a hybrid.

Unfortunately, after visiting a few dealerships and surviving sticker shock, it became obvious that we couldn't join the hybrid crowd; prices were just too prohibitive. (A hybrid Honda sells over ten thousand dollars more than a conventional model). This pricing issue is the case with many environmentally friendly products. So how do we go green without going broke? This is, without a doubt, a challenging issue for environmentalists everywhere.

In recent years, as concern for the environment has grown, so too has the potential market for environmentally friendly products. However, their overall market share remains dismal at best. The reasons behind this are twofold: First, these products are targeted at a small, but educated and environmentally conscious audience. Second, these products, priced higher than their mass-market alternatives, are often purchased by a more affluent segment of the population. How do we change this situation and cater to the general public? The simple answer: make the best possible use of market forces.

If consumers are to change their behaviour in a durable manner buying environmentally friendly goods, these goods need to be competitively priced. For this to happen, producers of such goods need to compete through economies of scale and wide access to mainstream distribution networks. As production increases, the

cost of manufacturing per unit drops, allowing for a similar drop in prices. But this is not sufficient if these competitively priced good are not distributed through mass-market channels that reach most consumers. This implies that environmentally friendly products shouldn't be limited to the exclusive lot of specialized stores but rather, they need to penetrate superstores as well, which cannot be done if they are not competitively priced.

We face an environmental spin-off of Gresham's Law: the "bad" products drive the better ones out of circulation.

For example, your typical pesticide-free organic food is consistently priced higher and mostly sold through specialized grocery stores. Even though they are slowly penetrating common supermarkets, they still remain a niche product because of the higher prices and consumer's lack of interest in reducing the magnitude of their consumption. This prevents a wide segment of consumers from making the most environmentally friendly choices.

Consider the case of biodegradable or reusable grocery bags. Environmentalists rightly call for a halt to the use of plastic bags for packing up groceries. These bags will pollute the environment for hundreds of years as they are composed of very stable plastic that does not degrade easily. Some grocers are listening and do offer a choice of buying a reusable bag. Unfortunately, there is no immediate advantage for consumers to buy and reuse such a bag. First, they have to buy it while the alternative is free. Second, they would have to change their shopping habits, as they will need to remember that they should bring along the appropriate bag(s) and then manage their buying habits accordingly to fit the bag's limitations on capacity. This may fit militant consumers' views and desires who are consistently willing to restrict their consumption to be able to afford greener choices, but not the average ones. Therefore, we are confronted with two factors that impede the adoption of green products: consumers' sensitivity

to prices and the rigidity of their habits in the absence of convenient alternative solutions.

In the long run, this dynamic prevents the advent of the long touted “green revolution.” We face an environmental spin-off of Gresham’s Law: the “bad” products drive the better ones out of circulation. By consistently pricing greener choices above their “not-so-green” equivalents, green producers will not achieve mass adoption and society will not benefit from a green quantum leap as competitively priced products will always have an edge. Furthermore, parallel distribution networks are an interesting means to slowly market such products in specific niches, but unless green products access mainstream distribution, their adoption will remain limited.

It is fair to assume that average consumers don’t want to wilfully harm the environment, so let’s offer them a real choice. Experience shows that it is possible to adopt new environmentally friendly products and processes with negligible effects on consumers.

Take the use of CFCs (i.e. chlorofluorocarbons) for example, chemicals once widely used in sprays and refrigerants. Following the discovery that they were harmful to the environment, more precisely to the ozone layer, many initiatives for substitution have spawned and proved successful. Nowadays, it is possible to find competitively priced products without CFCs on store shelves.

The same thing may happen on the plastic bag front. The SAQ (Quebec’s liquor board) recently switched to biodegradable plastic bags instead of the conventional ones, and at no cost for the consumers. This is an excellent initiative and time will tell if it delivers on its potential as more retailers adopt similar replacements.

The lesson from the above initiatives is obvious: the key to successful green products adoption is to undercut their “not-so-green” equivalents through competitive pricing. But pricing itself will not constitute an advantage if such products are not widely distributed and made readily available for ordinary consumers.

By the way, as for getting a new car, we ended up deciding against it. Maybe, in the short term, that was the most environmentally friendly decision of all.

Yan Cimon

Yan Cimon is a PhD candidate (Administration) at HEC Montréal, an internationally ranked business school. He is also the Commanding Officer of 712 Communications Squadron, a Canadian Forces Communications Reserve unit. Yan strives to serve Canada’s civilian and military communities. At university, he represented his peers, co-founding the graduate student body at HEC Montréal for both master’s and doctoral students. A wide range of command and staff positions in Canada and abroad characterize Yan’s military journey. He was awarded a Task Force Bosnia Herzegovina Commander’s Commendation for his outstanding contribution to the mission. He is also one of the few Canadian alumni of National Defence University (Washington, DC). Early in his PhD studies, he taught various strategic management courses to executives and graduate and undergraduate students. His research focuses on capabilities and collaboration within inter-organizational social networks. Yan says his foreign assignments—military and civilian—have reinforced his desire to meaningfully contribute to transforming Canada into a model citizen of the international community.

I appear to have been blessed with the healthy genes of my grandmother, who recently died in an accident, completely fit at the age of 95. Still, I am deeply concerned about the fate of health care.

I want Canada to have a strong and viable system capable of providing timely, quality care to those in need. And I want to see us use it as little as possible, not because the system is struggling to meet demand, but because demand has been lowered due to improved levels of health.

Both of these goals are attainable. In fact, they support one another. Better personal health is not only desirable on a human level, it is also essential for the health care bottom line.

I have worked for many years in the arena of health care, considering its challenges at both micro and macro levels. What I see is a system that is heavily focused on the costly activities of treatment, while chronically under-prioritizing prevention and health-promoting activities that would aid in decreasing levels of illness and injury.

I, like all Canadians, hear repeatedly that health care is in financial crisis and we cannot afford to meet the demand for services through a universally accessible public system. It's time we approached this challenge more proactively, investing in the goal of health over illness, and reaping the financial benefits of doing so.

Take cancer, for example.

This disease causes immeasurable pain and grief to a huge proportion of our population. It also costs us \$2.5 billion annually in direct treatment expenses. More than one in three Canadians will manifest cancer in our lifetimes, a ten-fold increase since the 1930s.

The World Health Organization estimates that 25 percent of those cancers can be linked to exposure to environmental and occupational toxins (chemical carcinogens). Yet we hear little about this, and see even less action aimed at seriously tackling this cause of disease.

If we were able to reduce the incidence of these exposure-related cancers by even 10 percent, we would realize \$250 million in annual savings to our health budgets, funds that could be applied to other priorities, within or outside of health care.

We can do the same kind of math on many costly diseases and ask the same key question. Can we not prevent some illness for less than it costs us to treat it?

We already do to some extent, but we can do better. Canada is recognized internationally in the arena of health promotion—an integrated range of strategies aimed at providing individuals and communities with the information and supports needed to maximize their health and prevent illness. We played a leadership role in the initial articulation of this concept, gathering nations together in 1986 to draft the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion.

If we were able to reduce the incidence of exposure-related cancers by 10%, we would realize \$250 million in annual savings to our health budgets.

We are not lacking for on-the-ground, examples of good health promotion and prevention programs, developed and implemented in a wide range of areas. The province of Ontario has been a leader in the implementation of Community Health Centres. Oriented to the communities they are located in, these facilities deliver both health promotion and illness treatment services through inter-disciplinary teams of health care practitioners working in tandem with community development workers.

The success of these Centres, and the model they utilize, is evidenced by the Ontario government's recent decision to fund the creation of 15 new CHCs, as well as by the more than 100 other Ontario communities that have requested such a facility.

Many such proactive efforts at prevention and health promotion exist, but they remain at the margins rather than the centre of our system, seriously limiting their scope, impact, and thus the benefits that we draw from them. We need to shift these efforts to the centre.

Our commitment to prevention and health promotion must include, but go well beyond, individual education if such a shift is to have meaningful impact. We must seriously tackle the root causes of illness and support the broader determinants of health, including housing, nutrition, clean environments, and other factors, through the vehicles of government policy and action.

Take again the example of cancers caused by exposure to toxins. Individual awareness and education about the risks can empower individuals to make different choices if they have the resources and ability to do so. But ultimately we are limited by the presence of these harmful chemicals in so many products we utilize, from washing detergents to the carpets in our homes to exhaust in the air we breathe.

These need to be removed at the source if we really want to tackle their impact on our health. Only government regulation and pressure on industry to create safer alternatives can accomplish that.

We need only look to Europe for evidence that this can be done, and positive health benefits reaped. In 2003, the EU introduced its REACH legislation, aimed at decreasing public exposure to carcinogens through a combination of regulatory measures, bans on known carcinogens, and consumer right-to-know labeling laws. This legislation clearly puts the onus on producers to prove no harm, and acts as an incentive to them to invest in finding and using safer alternatives. The EU will reap the health benefits of this legislation in both human and financial terms.

It's time for Canada to renew and build on our commitment to prevention and health promotion. Leadership is needed to make this a priority across all jurisdictions. Now is the time. We need

solutions to our health care sustainability conundrum.

If we make healthier Canadians our goal, a healthier, more financially viable system will follow.

Sheelagh Davis

Sheelagh Davis believes that we all hold the power to create change. Working as a popular educator and organizer, her efforts have focused on building this capacity and coupling it to a vision of 'change' that reflects principles of justice, equity, and sustainability. Combining this passion with skills in process design, facilitation, and collaborative leadership, Sheelagh has had the rich and privileged opportunity to participate in efforts to address issues of social and environmental justice, human rights, globalization and democracy-building in communities across Canada, throughout Latin America, and in her native South Africa. Most recently, she has undertaken human rights-focused work in rural and urban Mexico; used theatre and dialogue as tools for encouraging public engagement around issues of water protection and governance; and developed a justice-focused international youth leadership program. Currently, Sheelagh works in Vancouver as an educator for the BC Nurses' Union, focused on building nurses' capacity to actively engage in the crucial public issue arena of health care. In recent years she had the opportunity to reflect on and deepen her work through undertaking an interdisciplinary Masters of Environmental Studies degree at York University.

Is Pearson’s Nobel Peace Prize the Bane of Canadian Foreign Policy?

On a small non-descript pillar in the lobby of Foreign Affairs Canada hangs Lester B. Pearson’s Nobel Peace Prize—a reminder of Canada’s high-water mark on the international stage.

Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his and Canada’s suggestion and deployment of a peacekeeping force that separated opposing forces in the Suez while a peace plan was implemented. For many Canadians the crisis and prize remain the defining moment of Canadian foreign policy. Even today, 50 years later, it continues to symbolize our international role as a pacifist intervener that puts global interests before national self-interest.

But where has this ideal led us? Our current foreign policy emphasizes multilateralism, internationalism and the export of Canadian values, and is focused on bettering the world. And yet, despite our successes, we seem directionless, purposeless and marginal.

Did Pearson mislead us? Did his success focus Canada in the wrong direction? Is his Peace Prize the bane of Canadian Foreign Policy?

The answer is no. The problem is not Pearson, but how we came to misunderstand the man, his ideas, and his legacy. Much of the popular imagery surrounding Pearson is myth, a national selective memory that he would abhor.

If we are serious about building a foreign policy for tomorrow we must dismantle the myths of Pearson as boy scout and dove and recapture the three pillars of his success: creative and entrepreneurial problem solving, understanding of power politics, and the pursuit of national interests within a framework of Canadian internationalist values.

The Suez Crisis and Pearson’s invention of peacekeeping is the perfect starting point for a critical reassessment. Pearson did not advocate peacekeeping out of a humanitarian desire to prevent some far-off war. Rather, he recognized that the imminent escalation of the Suez Crisis

into a war between the United States and Soviet Union posed a real and direct threat to Canada.

In 1956, intercontinental ballistic missiles were part of the world’s nuclear arsenal. Consequently, any war between the superpowers would have been fought in the skies over Canada as Soviet strategic bombers raced across our airspace to deliver their nuclear payloads.

Pearson’s peacekeeping was not designed to prevent a crisis in the Middle East per se but to prevent nuclear bombs from falling out of the sky over Toronto. Pearson was no boy scout. His peacekeeping legacy was not rooted in altruism or idealism but in pragmatic, creative and ultimately self-interested problem-solving.

We must dismantle the myths of Pearson as boy scout and dove and recapture the three pillars of his success.

Nor was Pearson a dove. He understood the need for economic and social resources in bettering the world, and established 0.7 percent as a benchmark for foreign aid budgets. Yet, he equally understood the role of military power.

We seem to suffer from collective amnesia on his role as a key architect, negotiator and signatory of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As he noted in a 1951 speech on the Soviet threat: “Our defence in this conflict must be one of increasing and then maintaining our strength, while always keeping open the channels of negotiation and diplomacy. Arms must go hand in hand with policy.” Nor do we remember that, as Secretary for External Affairs he would have been deeply involved in the decision to participate in the Korean War. Pearson was unafraid to confront those whose goals were antithetical to Canadian values and our way of life, even with force.

Finally, Pearson may have been a multilateralist, but he was a pragmatist first and foremost. He understood the importance of power politics and the limits of treaties. He would almost certainly have support the ideals of the landmines treaty and responsibility to protect but he would have been concerned about the focus on drafting legal documents as opposed to bringing the great powers on side.

In his own negotiations on the UN Charter he noted that "...if the great powers have the will and desire to cooperate, even if the machine isn't perfect, it won't matter very much. It will work. Therefore, Canada's preoccupation with San Francisco [UN Charter] is based on the hard realities of the existing international situation." He understood that power politics matters in international relations and put it at the heart of his designs.

Canada's foreign policy today seems more concerned with getting the principles right than it is with engaging the interests of the great powers. This approach has won us some friends but it has also pushed us away from the role from which Pearson and Canada derived their influence—great power interlocutor.

Pearson was a Canadian success because he was pragmatic, he was creative and he solved problems that threatened Canada's national interests. While the Department of Foreign Affairs remains a creative problem-solver it is rarely allowed to be pragmatic or self-interested. Consequently, it is no wonder that we Canadians have acquiesced to declining Defence, Aid and Foreign Policy budgets.

By transforming our foreign policy into a luxury item—a charitable endeavour focused on helping others—our leaders have made the tools of diplomacy easy target for critics and budget cutters.

For Canadian foreign policy to experience another "Golden Age" it must once again become relevant to Canadians. Relevant means pursuing a foreign policy that understands Canada's interests, articulates them clearly and finds creative means to advance

them in a manner that is consistent with our internationalist values. Pearson understood this. For he was neither a hawk nor a dove, a chooser of interests *or* values. He was a solver of Canadian problems.

We should do more to pay respects to the scope and depth of this great man's worldview and accomplishments. It just may be that in doing so we will learn how to live up to his true legacy.

David Eaves

David Eaves is driven to renew Canada's role in the world and Canadians' role in Canada. "I see Canada as a model, an experiment where Canadians, and the world's citizens, can exchange ideas in pursuit of building a more inclusive and just society," says the Vancouver native who has a BA from Queen's and a Masters of International Relations degree from Oxford. He has recently concluded work with Vantage Partners, a spin-off of the Harvard Negotiation Project, where he was lead author of the Canada25 report "From Middle to Model Power: Recharging Canada's Role in the World." He is a frequent guest speaker on this topic, engaging students, academics and policymakers at, among other places, Mt. Alison, UBC, Queen's, McGill, the Privy Council Office and Foreign Affairs Canada. Passionate about conflict resolution, David believes any problem can be solved, even when parties appear to violently disagree—a belief that guides his actions as a negotiation consultant to Fortune 500 firms, a Canada25 organizer, and a volunteer mediator in South Boston courtrooms. Currently on contract as a policy advisor with the Privy Council Office, David is also Canada's 2005 Sauv  Scholar at McGill. He plans to research and write on Canadian foreign policy, network-based organizations and civic engagement.

A young woman from mainland China was promised a dream job as a waitress in a Canadian restaurant. Her dream was dashed upon arrival to Vancouver. She was taken instead to a massage parlour where her manipulator demanded she pay back her “debt” to him by raising \$11,000 a month by having sex with strangers. She escaped after a month of servitude, only to be tragically disrespected yet again. This time it was the Canadian government ignoring her needs by sending her home without any protections.

Canada’s response to human trafficking denies the victims the support, security and safety they deserve. We have invested in technologies and procedures to strengthen our borders against illegal migration and developed new legislation to prosecute those responsible for these heinous offenses. But our government has ignored the victims of this crime.

An estimated one million women, children and men around the globe are coerced each year into economically, sexually and physically exploitative situations. Victims trafficked into Canada often come from Central and South America, Eastern Europe and Asia, arriving by plane, car, or more dangerous container ships and shuttered trucks.

Most of those trafficked into Canada are women and children forced into prostitution and slavery-like work conditions. However, men are increasingly being trafficked to work in dangerous or difficult jobs with inadequate pay. Canadians, too, are trafficked within our own borders for prostitution.

The young Chinese woman who was coerced into the Vancouver sex trade told her story last month in a British Columbia provincial court room at the first trial held under Canada’s recently enacted human trafficking laws. If convicted, her trafficker Michael Ng faces potential life imprisonment and a \$1-million fine.

She and another woman abused by Ng have received no formal Canadian protection or assistance, reports a Vancouver women’s community group. This group notes that one Chinese-speaking female RCMP officer has

supported the women in small ways during the preparations for the trial, but the women will be returned home without any further protection. Incomplete and ad hoc responses to victims is not a winning formula for encouraging future victims to participate in trafficker prosecutions.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime just released a report on human trafficking in late April. Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa observed, “Humane and sensitive treatment is not just a moral imperative—it also increases the likelihood that victims will overcome their understandable fear and testify against their abusers.”

Without a comprehensive strategy to combat human trafficking, Canada will continue to be a destination for its victims.

Support is the first required protection for victims of human trafficking. Trafficked people need immediate access to counseling, translation, health care and legal advice. Well-funded women’s and immigrant centres must partner with the police to have timely access to trafficked persons. But they must also work independently, since a victim’s primary needs can be at odds with the police focus on gathering testimony.

Secondly, the Canadian government must ensure that victims have the time and security to consider their next steps. The best method of providing this security is to grant an unconditional 90-day reflection period for trafficked persons. Some survivors will choose a safe passage home, while others may submit a refugee application. Either way, we hope that they will participate in the prosecution of their traffickers. Canada’s role is to develop a rapid system to ensure that everyone who qualifies as a trafficked person receives this unconditional temporary permit.

Finally, victims of human trafficking need to be safe under Canadian law. Any illegal activities they

perform while trafficked and under threat, coercion or force should be forgiven. As Costa reflects, “Protecting the victims may sound obvious, but in practice they are all too often treated as criminals who may face charges for violating immigration and anti-prostitution laws.” Canada’s current immigration laws create a practice of detaining trafficked people because they are without legal status.

Human trafficking is growing and is now the third most lucrative trade on the global black market, after drugs and guns. Without a comprehensive strategy to combat human trafficking, Canada will continue to be a destination for its victims. We have done well in developing prevention and prosecution measures, but now we must protect victims of trafficking with support, security and safety.

We Canadians are proud of our country’s role in advancing human rights, from challenging South African Apartheid to establishing the International Land Mines Treaty. The brave women testifying against Ng, and all the others who are trafficked into our country, are looking to Canada to continue this human rights tradition by protecting victims and helping to lead the fight against human trafficking.

Susanna Haas

Susanna Haas is deeply committed to fostering opportunities for citizens to engage with each other and with decision-makers in order to influence policy and governance. “I believe that collective wisdom is the greatest untapped resource of our time,” she says, “and it’s exciting to think that Canada’s wisdom comes from our amazingly diverse and talented population.” Susanna served as project coordinator with the Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform, a historic democratic process recently conducted in British Columbia. She is now working with AmericaSpeaks (USA) and Envision Sustainability Tools (Vancouver) where she continues to support citizen conversations that directly impact public decisions. A Vancouverite and graduate of Simon Fraser University’s communication program, Susanna was a participant of the school’s inaugural Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue. She is a long-standing board member of the Adam va-Adamah Environmental Society, leads outreach for a local Palestinian-Israeli peace initiative, and speaks publicly on ways to bring sustainability into our lives and classrooms.

For some, the aid business is just that—a business. When each NGO is out for itself, everyone loses.

More than \$2 billion promised, but next to nothing to show for it. Forget Gomery. Here's the real scandal: 37,000 dead, half a million homeless, one year after the tsunami, and little reconstruction in Sri Lanka.

We all saw images of the devastation—poorly constructed homes and schools cast aside as though smashed to the ground by a giant hand; burial sites out of mere mounds of sand. A sea of tent communities appeared almost overnight, while survivors kept watch by the ocean for loved ones washed away. Without boats, fishermen could not fish. Without irrigation equipment and seed money, farmers could not farm.

Sadly, the same can be said of Sri Lanka today.

We were in Sri Lanka, shipping school and health supplies, when the tsunami hit. We didn't seek out the crisis.

During the past 10 years, our work with Free the Children has taken us to challenging regions—from war zones to rural, indigenous communities. Rarely have we worked with the world watching on TV in a spotlight that inspired an outpouring of billions of dollars and brought aid organizations to an area en masse.

In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, every organization on the ground responded. Many more would follow.

Lloyd Hanoman, our director of operations, had contacts thanks to his work setting up women's co-operatives in the area. We had existing projects and connections from our anti-child labour efforts in Southeast Asia. So we were well acquainted with the area.

More than that, we now know first hand the challenges of development work in post-tsunami Sri Lanka.

The arrival of international help was heralded by new SUVs that rolled off planes. Boxes and boxes of bottled water were unloaded and delivered to

hotels along the coast, which were fully booked—not with tourists but rather with aid workers from around the world.

Most were soon embroiled in the cut-throat politics of non-governmental organizations—each group eager to nail down projects in areas frequented by the media. Consequently, the disbursement of aid was chaotic.

Now, one year after the tsunami hit Sri Lanka, we can reflect and identify challenges that hindered the help.

THE AMAZING RACE

It was a free-for-all from the start, despite the Sri Lankan presidential task force assigned to coordinate aid.

Aid workers rushed to plant their signs in devastated communities . . . At times, it felt like an election campaign.

Like a Wild West gold rush, there were no rules in the mad dash for a piece of reconstruction pie. The country was flooded with more than 36,000 NGOs—some legitimate, some bogus—forcing the government to temporarily suspend the registration of groups in the country.

Aid workers rushed to plant their signs in devastated communities, staking their claim and promoting their organization. It didn't always matter if another agency was on the case.

At times it felt like an election campaign. The constituents were not those in desperate need, but rather those back home watching the evening news.

Aid money rolled in. All the while, pockets of poverty, untouched by the tsunami, remained forgotten.

Such is the nature of crisis-based aid: short-term emergency relief takes precedence—as it should, temporarily—while long-term needs suffer. Without ongoing aid, however, emergency response becomes a mammoth task.

SHOW THEM THE MONEY

The numbers are vast, but they don't add up.

Almost \$2.1 billion was pledged in foreign aid for reconstruction estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. To date, according to the Sri Lankan development assistance database, only \$914 million has been disbursed.

The World Bank reports that half a million lives remain in limbo.

Communities cannot rebuild if the foundation of their recovery—the money—sits in bank accounts.

This is the case not only in Sri Lanka. In Indonesia, the hardest-hit country, the UN office of the special envoy for tsunami recovery shows that \$4.5 billion of the \$6.5 billion pledged from the international community has been put toward rebuilding. Reconstruction costs there are pegged at \$6 billion.

Red tape is to blame in cases that require setting up partners or determining which government agency will oversee a project. In other instances, development has yet to begin because NGOs are still completing paperwork and assessment reports.

It doesn't have to be this way.

After the tsunami, Free the Children raised more than \$1 million for medical supplies and another \$1 million in direct aid through our Adopt-a-Village program. Lloyd Hanoman quickly established contacts with all stakeholders—government officials and the local communities—to get projects approved and under way.

Almost one year later, all of our funds are in Sri Lanka. Work on all our projects—water, sanitation and alternative income programs, plus the

construction of a new vocational school and primary school—will be complete by January 28, 2006.

NOT ALL AID IS EQUAL

We focused our efforts on the Ampara District, far from the capital city of Colombo in a region that attracts few organizations. It is an area that has gone back and forth between Tamils and Sinhalese during a 22-year conflict in which more than 60,000 have died.

Rather than uniting the country in the wake of disaster, tsunami-relief efforts fuelled tensions. Because aid was channeled through the government in the immediate aftermath, the Tamil Tigers felt marginalized.

The US military refused to work with the Tigers, having identified the group as terrorists. As a result, some regions, both Tamil and Sinhalese, were left without aid.

NGOs failed to co-operate and co-ordinate efforts as they flocked to some regions instead of spreading out in highly affected areas.

Instead of objectively assessing human needs, many NGOs allowed regional politics to influence aid allocation. At best, the organizations missed a historic opportunity to build bridges. At worst, the unequal distribution of aid exacerbated tensions.

Since the earthquake in Pakistan and India, we've seen efforts to open borders between historic rivals to ease delivery of aid.

WHY WAIT FOR A TSUNAMI?

In one of the poorest regions in the world, one in five is malnourished. The infant mortality rate is 17 in 100. More than 90 percent of all buildings are damaged or destroyed. Homes have been burnt to the ground. Walls are riddled with bullet holes. We've seen terror in the eyes of children. We've met four-month-old babies with amputated limbs.

Lessons from the Tsunami *continued...*

But this is not Sri Lanka. This is the small West African country of Sierra Leone.

When we last visited, aid agencies were packing up. Where were they headed? To tsunami-affected areas and to Afghanistan or Iraq.

So many organizations are trapped in the chase for aid dollars. The news of the day generates funding. Constant poverty and civil war are old news in Sierra Leone, so there's little money.

So, too, in the Democratic Republic of Congo where malnutrition and disease have killed 3.8 million people. Or in Darfur, Sudan, where four million have been displaced.

In Africa each day, 2,700 people die from malaria and 8,500 from AIDS—a tsunami of death around the clock.

FOLLOW YOUR MONEY

Some voices in the NGO community are speaking out to develop a strategy that would co-ordinate aid on a consistent basis. Some, though, remain silent, afraid that criticism will slow donations.

We need more aid, but we also need to target where it goes. To get there, we must reflect on how NGOs operate. For starters, donors must hold groups more accountable.

Here in Canada it's dog-eat-dog during a crisis. Groups woo donations with expensive ad campaigns, instead of spending the money where it's desperately needed. This is unlike the crisis-based charitable system in the United Kingdom where donors give to a central group—one phone number, one website—which allocates money to projects.

Why doesn't Canada create such a system? It is a step in the right direction that four Canadian aid groups—CARE Canada, Save the Children Canada, Oxfam-Canada and Oxfam-Québec—have joined forces to raise funds and provide relief for Pakistan earthquake victims.

NGOs must put aside egos and co-operate in delivering aid on the ground.

After the tsunami, so much aid arrived so quickly but there was no effective distribution mechanism. In the rush, NGOs dole out projects where they can, allocating little time, patience or ability to work with all parties to build a system that might lend itself, in the case of Sri Lanka, to building peace.

Every organization has core competencies. Not one can be everywhere.

Donors and NGOs must shift their focus from media-heavy zones to other parts of the world.

Donors should take the time to ask with whom organizations are working. Are they building local capacity and local skills so that aid groups will exist long after the NGOs move to the next headline-grabbing crisis zone? Are they working with other NGOs?

The sad reality is that for some groups the aid business is just that—a business. When each NGO is out for itself, everyone loses—beneficiaries, the donors and, even, the NGO.

So donors must hold aid groups accountable.

NOT YESTERDAY'S NEWS

NGOs must focus on long-term empowerment. In the scramble after a crisis, communities are overlooked. For this reason post-emergency aid is not nearly as effective as empowering development aid.

Long-term help works to alleviate the causes of poverty, illiteracy, women's disempowerment and infant mortality. This is not "crisis aid," "flavour-of-the-month aid" or "front-page headline aid."

Donors have to be willing to give to both — to the crisis of the day and also to ongoing poverty-alleviation projects which are more effective over time.

That way, when crisis strikes, fewer people will be vulnerable.

Long-term aid helps a country deal with its own crisis instead of reaching out to the international community.

In this spirit, we can't forget Sri Lanka. One year later, we have shifted from short-term aid to projects that may take another year, five years, even 10. The story is out of the news, but the need remains.

Donors and NGOs must shift their focus from media-heavy zones to other parts of the world.

In the past year, people were captivated by the hurricanes in Central America, the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami in Southeast Asia. But beyond the front-page stories, famines and violence and war and the ever-ravaging scourge of AIDS are annihilating Africa.

AGAINST ALL HOPE

The true heroes to emerge from the devastation in Sri Lanka are those who have endured and are rebuilding.

We first sensed this hard-won optimism in the city of Pottuvil at a ceremony for a school the community will build with Free the Children. It will be the first building to be reconstructed in the city, the first vocational training centre to be rebuilt in all of Sri Lanka.

Everyone turned out to celebrate the groundbreaking. After a moment of silence, community leaders spoke about the future and children released 12 white doves. As we watched them soar, we were reminded that there is always reason to hope.

Published in the Ottawa Citizen on December 18, 2005.

Craig Kielburger

Children's rights advocate Craig Kielburger believes that "We are the Generation that We have been Waiting For!" In 1995, at age 12, he founded Free The Children, a network of 'children helping children through education.' FTC's international development projects have since improved the lives of more than one million children around the world, including the construction of over 400 primary schools in developing countries and distribution of more than 200,000 school and health kits in 39 countries. In 1999, with his brother Marc, Craig co-founded Leaders Today, an organization that provides training in leadership and global citizenship to more than 250,000 students annually across North America. Craig, a native of Toronto, is the author or co-author of four best-selling books, with translations in eight languages. He has spent the past 10 years addressing United Nations gatherings and government bodies, and has traveled to more than 40 countries speaking out for children's rights. He also co-chaired The Commission on Globalization with approximately 30 other co-chairs, including Mikhail Gorbachev and George Soros, to draft white papers for the United Nations. Craig is currently a student at the University of Toronto, where he is pursuing a specialization in peace and conflict studies. Craig has twice been nominated for a Nobel peace prize. In May, 2006, Craig was awarded the World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (WCPRC) for his work with Free The Children.

In the last election campaign, there were two terms that grated on me every time they came up in candidates' speeches, namely, "Canadian values" and "national unity." These expressions are most disturbing for me. They are filled with rhetoric and the notions are completely false. Incidentally, the matter of "national unity," that huge malaise, the thing that sticks in the craw of Canadian politics, is the result of a major disconnect between many so-called Canadian values and their actual application. It is also a direct consequence of the ideas conveyed by these two expressions.

"National unity" will remain a utopian ideal, a mere concept, as long as the underlying assumptions have not been deconstructed. The "State = nation" equation does not apply to this country; Canada is made up of a multitude of nations, peoples with the right to self-determination under international law. And the unity of nations in Canada will not come about until this right is fully recognized and integrated into the social and political landscape. As a State advocating values such as respect for human rights, justice and tolerance, Canada would do well to become more consistent; it would be that much stronger for it, at both the national and international level.

It is high time a nation's right to self-determination be entrenched in the Constitution. It is up to the Aboriginal, Québécois and all other nations to choose how they wish to exercise that right within or without Confederation. This right must be fully recognized, in perpetuity and without restriction.

The evidence shows that policies inspired by a cultural mosaic perspective of Canada have not silenced the aspirations of the country's stateless nations. Although they may accommodate cultural minorities, they are an insult to nations. On the other hand, policies based on the principle of a multinational Canada would foster mutual respect, rapprochement and a sustainable partnership among its constituent peoples.

It might be said that this recognition has already taken place. I maintain that what was done is the equivalent of a promise made with fingers crossed behind the back. Indeed, the federal government

has used the term 'nation' when referring to Aboriginal peoples for about a decade now. Although this marks a change in language, the term is interpreted in a rather limited way: the inherent right of Aboriginal nations to self-determination is still not officially recognized as an ancestral right and the few policy documents pertaining to self-determination published thus far specify that this right shall be exercised solely within Confederation. The Supreme Court has denied the Québécois the right to complete sovereignty and they are still waiting to be recognized as a distinct society within Confederation.

Canada is made up of a multitude of nations, peoples with the right to self-determination under international law.

Naturally, Ottawa will have to be courageous and uncharacteristically bold to get through this step toward reconciliation; it would shake up the country's political stability a bit. First of all, it may force Canada to recognize the existence of nations within the country other than the Aboriginals and the Québécois, such as the Acadian nation, for example. It would undoubtedly also presuppose a shuffling of internal jurisdictions, including territories and resources, and facilitate accession to full sovereignty for the nations that aspire to it.

Let's be realistic: would such recognition really break up the country? In the case of the Aboriginals, it would be rather surprising for a nation to want to exercise its right to self-determination by seceding. On the other hand, it could lead to the negotiation of specific agreements with our neighbours to the south to ensure respect for the rights of Aboriginal nations whose territory and population disregard the Canada-US border. Is a transboundary political entity really so impossible to imagine?

As far as Québec is concerned, there is no guarantee that the sovereignty movement would grow as a result of recognition of the right to self-determination. In fact, I am convinced that it

would be substantially diminished by it. For many Québécois, the core of sovereigntist aspirations is not some economic argument or in-depth political analysis, but rather a very simple and utterly emotional matter of the sense of belonging to a distinct nation. Nationalism is fed by a fear of hegemony and the feeling that its identity is in jeopardy; recognizing the distinct nature of Québec society in a sincere and official gesture would certainly help to dissolve these fears. This show of respect would foster more openness toward English-speaking Canada among Québécois, thereby freeing them from the logic in which Québec has imprisoned itself, namely, defining itself in opposition to the rest of Canada. Then, it would be possible to focus on what we have in common, instead of only on what makes us different.

By recognizing the existence of stateless nations dwelling within Canada and their ancillary rights, Ottawa would lay the foundation for respect on which to build relationships where mistrust and power struggles have no place.

This would signal the end not of two, but of many, solitudes.

Canada would be the stronger for it internationally, primarily because it would have more credibility defending human rights and brandishing its “Canadian values.” Canada would also become a model for leadership in the interpretation of peoples’ right to self-determination, a right that is still limited in the context of decolonization in international law. Furthermore, a redesigned Confederation—since there would have to be new orders of government created—could become an inspiring model for other multinational States.

Finally, Canada would be an example of courage, because it would have accepted the risk of destabilizing the country and disrupting social peace, for a time, in the name of the unity of the nations that comprise Canada.

Pascale Labbé

Pascale Labbé is completing her master’s degree in International Relations at Laval University, where she is specializing in the rights of indigenous peoples. A Québec City native, she has an interest in Canadian foreign policy and has been active in the advisory forum set up by Foreign Affairs Canada. During her graduate studies, Pascale worked as a research assistant at the Centre d’Etudes Interaméricaines (CEI), then at the Centre Interuniversitaire d’Etudes et de Recherches Autochtones (CIÉRA). She has a wide variety of international experience, including student internships, field studies, volunteering and student exchanges in Latin America and Germany. Pascale is also very active in human rights education, founding the Rights and Democracy Delegation at Laval University in 2004, the first official unit of the Rights and Democracy organization’s inter-university network. In that context, she has worked to raise awareness about the experiences of refugees and displaced persons, and about globalization’s impact on human rights. She recently completed an internship with the Canadian Human Rights Foundation (CHRF) and is in the midst of a practicum with Québec’s International Relations Department where she is working to organize the Climate Leaders Summit, an event to be held during the UN Climate Change Conference in Montréal. Pascale is also a ballet teacher and a musician.

Let's put reform first!

With over 4.9 billion missing in federal funding for postsecondary education, one might believe that the next round of federal-provincial negotiations will be a game of numbers. However, if the federal government, the provinces and finally Canadians want their money's worth, the focus must shift from dollars to methods.

Short of common principles, each time, it's the same waltz. The federal government wants to ensure the money is not spent elsewhere by way of attached conditions. The provinces protect their jurisdiction and refuse any conditions. In the end, neither is willing to give or accept anything of substance. Short of a satisfactory method, both will retreat to a minimal compromise, so as not to set a significant precedent. No one wins, but postsecondary education loses.

The real question is how to rebuild this fiscal relationship on principles that satisfy both levels of government, while respecting their respective responsibilities. The solution is to aim for three guiding principles: transparency, accountability and respect of jurisdictions. Following that, the actual transfer regime must be abolished and replaced by an independent and dedicated federal transfer for postsecondary education, with no other conditions attached.

The current transfer for postsecondary funding is in disarray. As part of the Canada Social Transfer (CST), postsecondary education money is included with funds for other social programs such as social assistance, early childhood development and learning as well as childcare. Thus, it is very difficult to establish the real federal contribution to postsecondary education, regardless of an increase or decrease of funding in such a general transfer.

This lack of transparency contributes nothing to the political landscape. Since nobody can clearly identify the federal contribution, each level of government can escape from its responsibilities whilst blaming the other. By increasing transparency, an independent transfer would keep them honest, if only a little bit. And Canadians

would benefit too. Greater transparency would allow citizens to better access the contribution of each level of government to postsecondary education and to distribute praise and blame accordingly.

To guarantee the accountability of its expenses, the federal government established a multitude of conditions specifying how the provinces are to spend their transfer. Though legitimate, the problem, notably with postsecondary education, is that attached conditions have become so specific that they range from investment in library collections to hiring of teachers, to infrastructure renovations.

Greater transparency would allow citizens to better access the contribution of each level of government to postsecondary education and to distribute praise and blame accordingly.

As provinces must recognize the legitimacy of the federal government's obligation to be accountable, the latter must recognize that this does not allow it to manage in the provinces' place.

In this context, the creation of an independent and dedicated transfer for the sole jurisdiction of postsecondary education would solve this dilemma. Such a transfer would constitute, in and of itself, a general condition strong enough to satisfy the federal government's obligation of accountability while leaving the jurisdiction's administration to the prerogative of the provinces.

The absence of attached conditions also offers another interesting advantage. By allowing the provinces to spend the money as they see fit, within the domain of postsecondary education, each province could target its own specific needs or foster its own strategy. Concretely, Québec

could relieve their under-financed universities, Alberta could invest in trade schools and Ontario could reduce tuition fees.

The idea of an independent and dedicated transfer for postsecondary education also meets the realities of Canadian politics. In this period of surpluses and reinvestment, a dedicated transfer would give the federal government a greater visibility, which is always highly sought after in Ottawa. For the provinces, the Council of the Federation and provinces such as Québec need to get results from Ottawa. The idea of a tangible and easily identifiable accomplishment is therefore very attractive.

Over the past years, postsecondary education has clearly paid the price for a dysfunctional transfer system, which has now become an inhibitor for reinvestment. What could explain that despite seven consecutive years of budgetary surpluses, federal funding for postsecondary education is still less today than it was almost 15 year ago?

On the eve of a new federal-provincial conference on postsecondary education, an increase in funding must be precipitated by the establishment of an independent and dedicated federal transfer for postsecondary education. It remains to be seen if the new Conservative government and its “fédéralisme d’ouverture” will be able to deliver the goods.

Guillaume Lavoie

After working in government relations on three continents, Guillaume Lavoie is passionate about the res publica. “Action Canada is an opportunity to learn and share various perspectives on public policies,” states the native of the Saguenay region in Québec, who reports on current issues concerning public administration for radio and television media. In addition to a Bachelor of Industrial Relations and certificates in business administration and law from Laval University, Guillaume is currently completing a master’s degree at the National School of Public Administration in Montréal (ENAP). Today, as Vice-President of Federal and International Affairs of the Québec Federation of University Students (FEUQ), the largest youth group in Québec, Guillaume devotes his time and energy to improving public policies pertaining to post-secondary education.

I am a Secwepemc person who cannot speak my own language. Imagine if your language was about to be lost, forever. English, French, Italian, Chinese; all were about to be eradicated.

Your culture and identity were absent: on the street, at work, in school, on TV, and in the newspapers. The language spoken, the faith followed, the governments under which you lived, all were disconnected from you and your culture.

For me, this is not an imagined reality, but what it feels like daily to be an Aboriginal person in Canada.

Of the 11 Aboriginal language families in Canada, only three (Algonquian, Inuktitut, and Athapaskan) are projected to survive into the future. Of the 53 to 70 languages in these language families, 70 percent are declining or endangered. Preserving Aboriginal languages is vital because of the strong link between cultural preservation and language. Without language there is no way to transmit our cultural values and traditions.

We consider our languages to be a gift from the Creator, encompassing our unique and distinct worldview extending well beyond the words themselves. They carry with them thousands of years of teachings and are our direct connection to our lands, traditions, history, and sacred places with their own traditional names.

If we lose our languages we lose teachings that have been passed from generation to generation by our elders for thousands of years.

The imminent loss of languages is an issue that hits close to home. I don't speak my own language because it was never spoken in my household, a legacy of the Indian Residential Schools. The schools were run by the government of Canada and religious organizations, pre-dating confederation. The last one closed not long ago, in 1996.

The schools were designed to assimilate Aboriginal people into Canadian society, based in the 1920 amendments to the Indian Act that legally required

all children aged 7 to 15 to attend Residential Schools.

I never heard Secwepemc spoken in my home. Until recently I never heard it spoken in our community by our elders, or anyone else, because the residential school wiped out entire generations of Secwepemc speakers from our community.

Not being able to speak Secwepemc has been the greatest source of my sense of loss of identity as a Secwepemc person. I never had the opportunity to learn my language in my community or school, but today I am ecstatic that Secwepemc is being taught in our First Nations elementary schools. While teachings our languages in school is an important step—it is not enough.

There has been increased recognition at the provincial and federal level of the need to protect First Nations languages. However, many will be lost forever without serious commitments from both provincial and federal governments to protect our languages.

Not being able to speak Secwepemc has been the greatest source of my sense of loss of identity as a Secwepemc person.

Most First Nations-run schools have had to develop language curriculum with little or no funding support, making full immersion programs nearly impossible. Many of our elders who are the last fluent speakers of our languages are passing on. The only ones left who can teach our languages fluently are dying, and our First Nations languages are literally dying with them.

Our languages are dying because of past government policies specifically intended to destroy First Nations language, culture, and traditions through the residential school system. It will take more enlightened contemporary federal and provincial policies to save them.

Our communities are struggling to save our languages, but we cannot do it alone. We need

legislation to protect and revitalize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages in Canada.

The First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres has proposed a framework for an Aboriginal Languages Act that calls for the establishment of a foundation and a budget to properly fund programs to protect, revitalize, maintain and utilize First Nations languages.

This is not unheard of in Canada. There is the *1990 Northwest Territories Official Languages Act* providing official language status for Inuktitut, Chipweyan, Cree and others. That agreement came with resources, over \$25 million and a language commissioner. Here in BC we have the *1990 First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Act* that established an advisory committee to administer a capital grant program.

In 2003 the Federal Government established a Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures. The task force today advocates for legislation to recognize the constitutional status of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis languages and equitable resources for language support at the same level as French and English.

It also recognizes that official language status without sufficient funding for programming and services will not sustain an endangered language, and highlights the disparity between funding offered for French language and First Nation, Inuit, and Métis languages in the Northwest Territories and Yukon. For this reason the task force advocates for funding on par with other languages to fund full immersion language programs that create fluent speakers, language programs available to youth and adults through post-secondary programs and communities, language teacher training, and a national language strategy.

The task of saving our languages is an immense undertaking requiring the immediate work of many more of our community members to assist those currently working to protect and maintain our languages. It will also take working in partnership with Federal and Provincial Governments to expand on the work that has already been done.

Most importantly, along with our community members it will take the interest of Canadians in learning First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages or at the very least helping us advocate to save our dying tongues.

Aboriginal people often talk of the connection between all things. One of the greatest connections between people is the languages we speak. Collectively if we work together we can maintain First Nations languages as a cherished component of the fabric of Canada. We can be connection through our languages while recognizing and protecting the rich, cultural heritage of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages.

Cheryl Matthew

Cheryl is passionate about making a difference in the Aboriginal community by working towards equity and social justice. She hopes to “promote and educate people on Aboriginal policy and research, an area where our people haven’t always been at the table.” Cheryl is Secwepemc (Shuswap), from the Simpcw First Nation in BC. She is also the executive director for the Centre for Native Policy and Research Society, an organization that she spearheaded. Through her company, Continuum Consulting, she provides research, policy analysis, facilitation, advocacy, and program management. Cheryl, a North Vancouver resident, completed her Bachelor of Arts at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in 2004, majoring in anthropology and minoring in sociology with a concentration in social policy analysis. She is a master’s candidate in leadership and training in the department of Organizational Leadership at Royal Roads University, and will convocate in May of 2006. Her thesis topic speaks to her deepest interest – “Developing an effective, inclusive, and respectful engagement model for Aboriginal groups in Greater Vancouver.” Cheryl is currently a board member of the N8V Action Youth Society and the CCPA-BC (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC Office) and has sat on the boards of many other organizations.

The 5,000 Ton Challenge

The last election was the first Canadian federal winter campaign in 26 years, but it was exceptional for another reason. It also was the first post-Kyoto federal election, called the same time as the United Nations Conference on Climate Change was being held in Montréal, a meeting conducted under Canada's presidency.

Ironically, this campaign turned out to be the most polluting in our country's history. The leaders of the four main parties emitted significant amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere, contributing to the earth's changing climate.

Our organization, Unisféra, estimated that the leaders' campaigns emitted some 5,000 tons of GHG. This figure includes emissions from their plane and bus travel and those of the journalists covering them. That already high number excluded emissions generated by the four party's approximately 1,000 candidates and thousands of volunteers and staff in 308 ridings.

This election's impact on climate was equivalent to adding 830 sports utility vehicles (SUVs) on Canada's roads for a year. The 2005–2006 electoral campaign cancelled out the efforts of 5,000 Canadians who have committed to the One-Ton Challenge by voluntarily cutting their own GHG emissions.

Many factors contributed to this excessively carbon-based election. The campaign was longer than normal, 56 days, and the parties had unprecedented financial resources for their campaigns, with a collective electoral budget that exceeded \$60 million. This exorbitant funding allowed the leaders to travel repeatedly from coast to coast. As they traveled to Vancouver from Montréal, Ottawa or Toronto to attend the first leaders' debate, each leader's plane emitted over 200 tons of GHG. When leaders campaigned by road, each bus in their caravan emitted one ton of GHG for every 300 kilometres traveled.

Democracy makes travel necessary, even desirable, but perhaps we need to attenuate the impact of electoral campaigns on our climate.

Unisféra invited the four leaders to embark on a 'carbon-neutral' campaign by offsetting their emissions through a program called *Planetair*. The British Liberal Democratic party offset their emissions during their campaign last year, while the Canadian government recently supported the offsetting of all emissions generated by the Climate Change Conference in Montréal. Emissions from the Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010 also will be offset.

By committing to a carbon neutral campaign, the four federal party leaders would have taken concrete action to protect the climate by compensating for their own emission of thousands of tons of GHGs into the atmosphere.

Offsetting emissions can be accomplished by financing projects that reduce GHG emissions, such as green/efficient energy programs, or by absorbing GHGs already present in the atmosphere through reforestation. This approach is supported by the Kyoto Protocol and is part of Canada's own climate change plan.

By committing to a carbon neutral campaign, the four federal party leaders would have taken concrete action to protect the climate by compensating for their own emission of thousands of tons of GHGs into the atmosphere. The cost would have represented a tiny fraction of the total expenses of all four parties, amounting to \$125,000 devoted to environmental projects. If political leaders are not willing to spend less than a thousandth of their budget on reducing their impact on the global climate, how can they convince Canadians of the necessity to invest billions of taxpayers money into implementing the Kyoto Protocol during the next six years?

The Leaders' commitment to offsetting their own GHG emissions in future elections would send a clear message to all Canadians that preventing climate change is a shared responsibility, politicians included.

In the last campaign, the Bloc Québécois accepted our invitation and ran the first ever carbon-neutral campaign in North America. We hope to rally all parties for the next campaign in a nonpartisan and inclusive effort to bring Canadians together on a goal we all support: protecting our climate.

The leaders faced extremely cold Canadian winter conditions during their campaigns. Hopefully a hot summer campaign with unprecedented heat waves will inspire them next time to take this one simple but concrete action against global warming.

Karel Mayrand

In 2002, Québec City native Karel Mayrand founded Unisféra International Centre, an independent think tank on sustainable development policy and law. Karel is frequently invited to give conferences in Canada and abroad and his expert opinion on sustainability initiatives is regularly sought by governments, United Nations agencies and the media. He also lectures at the graduate level on environment and international development issues at the Université de Sherbrooke and acts as special advisor on globalization and environmental issues for Pierre Marc Johnson, former Premier of Québec and Counsel to Heenan Blaikie. Prior to founding Unisféra, Karel organized, with the official endorsement of the Canadian Government, the first Hemispheric Trade and Sustainability Symposium which took place in parallel to the third Summit of the Americas (Québec City, 2001). From 1996 to 2000, he worked with several organizations to build an extensive network of international partners. He holds a BA in political science with honours (McGill University, 1994) and a Masters of International Relations degree (Université Laval, 1996).

In January, 2005, Canada committed \$425 million to help with Tsunami relief and reconstruction efforts in Southeast Asia. Two months later, we offered \$435 Million for General Motors in Oshawa and St. Catherine's to "secure the future of the sites and related employment for years to come," according to the Honourable Joe Volpe, at that time the federal Minister Responsible for Ontario.

A year on, it became clear that neither of these similarly sized aid efforts would achieve desirable results. On the anniversary of the December 26th Tsunami, as the media flooded back to Asia to document results, aid agencies clambered to demonstrate only modest progress and remind journalists that the job would take many years, not twelve months. Around the same time, unequivocally poor results emerged from General Motors. Instead of securing or boosting employment with the government's support, the firm instead announced layoffs of 3,600 Canadian workers as part of a global cost cutting effort.

A rational analysis would expect similarly negative public reactions to both cases. Surprisingly, there was stark contrast between the two. Many in the media argued that Canadians should be disappointed in the Tsunami relief, and individual donors griped in interviews and letters-to-the-editor that they regretted having been so generous a year prior. A robust public debate about foreign aid ensued, in which the humanitarian community highlighted the complexity of the task. Donor governments (including Canada's), the United Nations, and relief charities have asked for patience while the process of rebuilding regions prone to poverty, natural disaster and armed conflict grinds on. The debate and media scrutiny will likely continue for several more years until Canadians are assured that our financial support has achieved the desired outcome.

Hardly a peep of discontent could be heard about the GM aid. Though the media bemoaned the job losses and told sad stories about workers laid off during the holidays, no newspapers, radio, or television stations called for a review of federal aid to industry. No one asked tough questions about

whether government spending on private sector activity achieved its intended results.

The contrast speaks volumes about how differently Canadians regard domestic assistance and international aid. While domestic aid is permitted room for error, monies sent abroad are considered suspect. Neither view is constructive, and both have weaknesses. Aid at home and abroad would be positively influenced if we viewed them through a common lens.

The value in our sceptical view of foreign aid is that it demands results from public spending. Organizations seeking funds must demonstrate the merit of their cause and report back on how impact was achieved. But the downside is that we think we know it all when it comes to foreign aid. Canadians often assume that the task of helping others abroad is straightforward, and then develop unrealistic expectations, such as a twelve-month timeline for tsunami reconstruction.

Aid at home and abroad would be positively influenced if we viewed them through a common lens.

Public misunderstanding was epitomized by Mark Kelley, a CBC journalist, who in an infamous March tsunami feature story on *The National* documented a small Indonesian boy playing with a paper cup, concluding that "millions of dollars from Canadians and all he has to play with is a paper cup?! We have to demand better." What Kelley failed to understand was that poor Indonesian children played with rudimentary toys like paper cups prior to the tsunami, and that giving away Barbie dolls and Lego blocks to recovering kids would create confusion, imbalance, and tensions between those who received them and those who did not.

By contrast, our view on domestic aid is forgiving to the complexities of domestic economic development. We appreciate why things sometimes go wrong: in the case of General Motors,

Canadians knew that unpredictable economic factors such as the price of oil and the pace of consumer spending negatively impacted the auto industry and panned plans for job growth. Though disappointed, we showed some appropriate forgiveness with the GM failure that we did not afford tsunami relief.

But we often can be too forgiving, because we incorrectly assume that domestic aid helps us even when results aren't achieved. We falsely believe funds spent at home can never have a negative impact. It's being spent on Canadians, after all. Yet this is hardly the case: creating wealth in Canada has to do with economic growth, and badly spent domestic aid acts as a crutch for industry, inhibiting competitiveness.

It may surprise many to learn that foreign aid is not spent without some direct benefit to Canadians. Humanitarian professionals gain employment, companies making relief items boost sales, and firms offering technical expertise earn contracts to provide assistance in places that need help. Though precise estimates vary, experts commonly suggest that domestic economic benefit from our foreign aid equals one third of the total value. In a broader sense, foreign aid also benefits us when it helps keep war and disease at bay and prevents their spread to our doorstep (see: Avian Flu.)

Canadians should expect better results from any substantial investment of public money. Reporting on domestic aid could be more rigorous and in line with performance expectations for foreign assistance. Meanwhile the complexities of international development should be better appreciated, so that we are not too quick to cry foul about foreign aid.

This is a tall order, but clarity could be provided to the media and public by a third-party agency with expertise in aid impact evaluation. The federal government could commission an independent agency to administer a "aid effectiveness index" for all federal grants above \$50 million dollars. Each grant, whether domestic or foreign, would be independently evaluated for impact compared to the stated objectives, factoring into careful

consideration negative results due to acceptably difficult or unforeseen causes. Grants would be rated on a simple A to F scale in a report card issued annually. The federal departments giving grants would also be evaluated on the performance of the funds for which they were responsible.

Such an agency would greatly help individual Canadians and journalists understand the effectiveness of public spending and end the double standard of aid. A more competitive marketplace for government funding would follow, ensuring greater benefit for both Canadians and those we seek to help abroad.

Jesse Moore

Jesse Moore sees nascent opportunity at the intersection of the private sector and international development: "Whenever people from business and development get together and actually listen to one another, a whole world of possibility opens up." As director of Private Sector and Development for CARE Canada – one of the country's largest humanitarian organizations – Jesse has traveled to more than 20 developing countries, spoken at numerous international conferences and business schools, and consulted with the Minister for International Cooperation on fostering enterprise solutions to poverty. Jesse previously worked as a management consultant for Monitor Company and was selected by Maclean's magazine in 1997 as one of 100 Canadians to Watch. Raised in Toronto, he spent four years studying communications at the University of North Carolina courtesy of a prestigious Morehead Scholarship. Jesse has since lost all traces of a southern accent, though it periodically re-emerges when he gets overly enthusiastic about college basketball games or a tall glass of Carolina sweet tea.

Clear political vision on patent policy is sorely needed in Canada today. The stakes are high; Canadians risk ceding control of technologies vital to their health, economy and culture to foreign multinational corporations and other countries.

Patents give an inventor a legal monopoly in exchange for publicizing an invention. They are granted by the state. The state's goal is to ensure inventions aren't kept secret and thus not brought to market by reassuring inventors that their inventions won't be stolen by a competitor if they disclose them. That reassurance is the inventor's exclusive patent right to commercialize an invention, a right that will be actively protected by the courts.

Two recent conflicts demonstrate the importance of patents to our economic and social well-being.

The antiviral drug Tamiflu, developed and patented by Swiss-based global pharmaceutical company Roche Holding AG, is the best existing treatment for the flu. Governments around the world are stockpiling supplies in expectation of havoc from an avian flu pandemic outbreak, but the only real crisis so far is the one caused by the patent system.

Roche lacks capacity to produce enough Tamiflu to meet global demand, and certainly not Canada's before 2007. Roche has refused to license its exclusive rights to produce Tamiflu to other companies. Roche would be well paid by those companies for a license. It intends, however, to maintain the high price at which it sells Tamiflu by supplying it without competition from other manufacturers.

Licensing is the only legal way that any company other than Roche could produce Tamiflu. As a result Canada will be 47 million doses short of sufficient Tamiflu unless Roche's patent is challenged. Even UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has suggested that Roche's patent rights should be suspended to allow widespread manufacture of Tamiflu.

Producers in countries such as Brazil and India have flouted Roche's patent rights by

implementing plans to produce the drug without Roche's agreement. Canada could import from them but under international trade law has in principle agreed not to import cheap generic drugs from developing nations.

As a result one company is using the patent system to hold Canadians hostage. Emergency health care should not rest on a business decision to control manufacture and sale rather than license. But structurally the patent system permits this. A patent-holder who cannot produce enough to supply a market can refuse to allow others to do so, however much money the buyer is willing to pay and however severe the consequences may be. While tools to force patent-holders to license exist (so-called "compulsory licensing"), these means are rarely, if ever, used.

A patent-holder who cannot produce enough to supply a market can refuse to allow others to do so, however severe the consequences may be.

A second reason why Canadian policy-makers need to take patents seriously is evident in the recent litigation in the United States over the Blackberry technology, developed by the Canadian company "Research in Motion" (RIM). The Blackberry is an extremely popular wireless technology used to send and receive emails and other data. It is a ubiquitous personal and business communications tool in Canada, but also in the US.

Any email message sent or received from a Blackberry in Canada or the US is sent through a "relay" component of the Blackberry wireless network located in Canada. RIM's wireless network technology was found to have infringed US patents held by a company called NTP Inc. RIM's Canadian relay is a key part of that wireless system. That causes a jurisdictional problem.

Generally a US court is only allowed to consider actions that infringe a patent that occur in the US. On October 7, 2005, however, the U.S. Federal

Court of Appeals stretched the arm of US law. It said that courts could disregard the fact that RIM's relay is located in Canada, since "control and beneficial use" of the Blackberry system was exercised in the US. The bottom line is that actions outside the US can now infringe a patent held in the US. When the US Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of this decision, that ruling became the undisputed law of the land.

This ruling is important because on February 24, 2006 the US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia will decide whether or not to issue an injunction against RIM to prevent it from infringing NTP's patents. In a worst-case scenario an injunction could force Blackberry to shut down its relay system in Canada. The District Court is likely to take the less drastic step of awarding NTP money instead of shutting down Blackberries. But the Federal Court of Appeal's ruling means that in principle a US court could stop Canadians from sending and receiving email (if RIM didn't have appropriate software workarounds to make sure shutting down the relay only affected its US customers).

Canadians' daily life is increasingly dependent on technologies. These technologies can save lives, help run our economy and let us talk to each other from different ends of this vast country. New technologies are almost invariably protected by patents. Canadian policy-makers should take a leadership role in ensuring that interests fundamental to Canadians aren't held to ransom by multinational corporate interests (Roche) or foreign courts (RIM). They can do this by advocating internationally that some essential technologies should not be subject to the same rules as others. Compulsory licensing and production by generics during emergencies should be encouraged in the case of medicines. Canada should also reduce its dependence on patents over communication technologies. Instead it should encourage the development of an open source culture that focuses on business incentives as opposed to monopolies to grow its technology sector.

Tina Piper

Tina Piper's driving goal is to understand and improve the way society distributes property and new technologies. After completing engineering science at the University of Toronto as a National Scholar in 1998, she returned to Halifax to complete a law degree at Dalhousie University. She then pursued a graduate degree in law at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. Her doctorate explored how patents were often irrelevant or damaging to the historical development of many medical technologies. Tina is currently clerking for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Next year she will commence a professorship at McGill University and also work as a lead consultant for a non-governmental organization, developing an alternate, equitable system of patents and copyright law. Throughout her career, Tina has been intensely involved in human rights and equity issues. She continues to work as a consultant on human rights and development issues for indigenous communities in Central America; as a legal adviser to developing countries before the World Intellectual Property Organization; and has worked on government and civil society projects in the areas of human rights law, women's health, equality, immigration, poverty, international trade and immigration law.

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