



Election Kit 2011

Will your Member of Parliament work to end global hunger?

Questions for federal election candidates - March 2011

Canadians will go to the polls on May 2, 2011. There are many important issues at stake in this federal election. At Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we are concerned about how Canada's international aid and development policies affect the poorest and most vulnerable people in the developing world.

With that in mind, below find a few issues related to Canada's role in helping poor people around the world—issues you can raise with candidates in your riding. Each item contains some background information and a question you can ask a candidate.

Don't be discouraged if candidates don't seem to understand the issue well, or if their answer is just a prepared text from their party. Simply asking the question is an effective way of letting candidates know that Canadians expect their parties to take action on poverty and hunger issues.

Now that the four major parties outside Quebec have released their party platforms, Foodgrains Public Policy staff have evaluated the platforms against the questions in the kit—what do they say about foreign aid, reducing global hunger, climate change, food aid and food reserves? [Click here for the answers.](#)

Issue: Investing in International Development

Background

Investing in international development is effective at reducing poverty and hunger, and promoting peace. The United Nations recommends that developed countries spend 0.7% of their GNI (gross national income) on international development. Canada now spends 0.32%, making it 18th out of 23 donor countries. Canada can afford to invest more in international development, as our economy is recovering from the recession faster than any other industrial nation.

Question

How will you ensure that the Canadian government meets the goal of increasing Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of Gross National Income?





Issue: Investing In Agriculture to Reduce Global Hunger

Background

In response to the global food crisis in 2008, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) committed to assisting poor people in developing countries to grow more food and improve their livelihoods. CIDA doubled its investment in agriculture for the three-year window from 2009-2011, but has not yet made any commitment past March, 2011. The world is facing another food crisis, and there is a risk that Canada's investment in developing country agriculture will decrease.

Question

How will you ensure that Canada maintains its investment in developing country agriculture at the enhanced level of the past 3 years?

Issue: Helping Small-scale Farmers Adapt to a Changing Climate

Background

Small-scale farmers are among those most vulnerable to climate change—and increasing hunger as a result. Under international agreements, Canada has committed to provide funding to help developing countries deal with climate change. This funding is supposed to be balanced between adaptation—helping people cope with the effects of climate change—and mitigation—promoting actions that prevent these changes. It is also supposed to be new and additional money.

Canada announced \$400 million for 2010 for climate change financing. However, only 11 percent of it supported adaptation in developing countries—places that have been hard hit by climate change, and that have the fewest resources for adaptation. Moreover, a portion of that funding came from our existing aid budget, taking away from other aid efforts. The Foodgrains Bank is advocating for funding in future years that does much more to empower small-scale farmers to adapt to changes they are already experiencing.

Question

How will you ensure that Canada keeps its commitment to helping poor people adapt to climate change?



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Issue: Food Aid

Background

Canada is the most generous per capita donor of food aid in the world. Through our support for food aid programs, we help people recover from earthquakes, floods, droughts and other emergencies. Canada is currently leading efforts to renew an international treaty to share the burden of ensuring that there is adequate food available for those caught in these emergencies. With uncertainty about there being enough crops to meet the needs for food, feed for meat production and production of increasing amounts of biofuel, the need for this kind of international sharing the burden is increasing.

Question

How will your party support Canada's continuing role as a global leader in ensuring enough food to meet the needs of those caught in emergencies, including continuing our current commitments to the new treaty?

Issue: Food Price Volatility/Food Reserves

Background

Nearly half the people in the world live on less than \$2 a day and their biggest expense is food. Due to changes in the way food crops are being used, the balance between food production and consumption has started to tip creating occasional shortages. While the balance tends to correct itself within months, there are huge swings in food prices in the short term, meaning that millions of people can't afford enough food. This volatility is not good for farmers either, as it makes it hard for them to plan what to plant or how much to invest. What is needed now is a system of food reserves to cover these short periods when the production – consumption balance is threatened.

Question

How would your party support Canada promoting the establishment of these food reserves?

