Trends in Canadian Aid

Briefing Note Two

What issues are driving the changing priorities in Canadian ODA?

Section Six: Humanitarian Assistance in Canadian ODA

September 2026

Prepared for Cooperation Canada

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Promoting Social Justice

Preface and Acknowledgements

In January 2025, Cooperation Canada and AidWatch Canada published a series of Briefing Notes,[1] which provided an overview of main trends in Canadian ODA since 2015/16. The scope and allocations for Canadian aid have shifted over this past decade, responding to urgent global challenges (the pandemic and a deepening climate crisis) as well as Canadian foreign policy preoccupations (Ukraine), trade and investment challenges. Documenting changes in the Canadian aid context can serve as a foundation for understanding the current unravelling of international cooperation and to inform advocacy directions for feminist aid priorities that focus on reducing poverty and inequalities.

In May 2026, Cooperation Canada commissioned AidWatch Canada to update these four Briefing Notes, taking into account recent transformations in Canadian development cooperation with the most recent aid data for 2024/25. These Briefing Notes are organized around four thematic areas:

1) Overall Trends in Canadian ODA: What are the key dimensions of its volume and allocations?

2) What issues and approaches are driving the changing priorities in Canadian ODA?

3) Tracking ODA for Reducing Poverty and Inequalities: The Core Poverty Accountability Standard (CPAS), a new accountability metric, and

4) What are the main channels for delivering Canadian ODA, including multilateral organizations and CSOs?

They will continue to be updated periodically, taking into account the changing dynamics of development cooperation in the coming years.

I am very appreciative of the leadership and support by Paul Farran, Director of Policy and Advocacy, and Darron Seller-Peritz, Policy Analyst and Program Officer, with Cooperation Canada. Darron has encouraged and facilitated the research in every iteration and has generously arranged Cooperation Canada's financial support for the work needed to bring together these updated Briefing Notes. Paul and Darron provided thoughtful input into the development of the four Notes along with careful copy editing of the text and suggestions for its improvement.

The author alone is responsible for the content, calculations, and any errors or omissions in the analysis. The resulting Briefing Notes do not imply agreement by Cooperation Canada's Board of Directors or the Board of Directors of AidWatch Canada.

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September 2026

[1] See https://aidwatchcanada.ca/canadian-aid-trends/ for the 2025 Briefing Notes and a summary article by Brian Tomlinson and Darron Seller-Peritz.

Section Six[2]
Humanitarian Assistance in Canadian ODA

Highlights

1. Level of humanitarian assistance fluctuates in value The fluctuation in Canadian humanitarian assistance since 2020/21 is mostly related to support for Ukraine. Discounting Ukraine, this assistance has been declining since 2020/21, but increased in 2024. In that year aid to Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia and Lebanon all had large increases.

2. Share in Real Canadian ODA is diminishing As a share of Real ODA (ODA less in-donor refugee costs), humanitarian assistance has declined each year from 15% in 2018/19 to a low of 8% in 2023/24, before increasing to 10% in 2024/25.

3. Canada ranks high among DAC providers Canada ranks 7th among DAC providers in its annual gross commitments to humanitarian assistance and has provided approximately 2.4% of humanitarian assistance between 2020 and 2024. In recent years, Canada has not kept pace with DAC total humanitarian assistance. Its share of this assistance has been declining since 2022, from 3.4% that year to 2.2% in 2023, and 1.6% in 2024.

4. Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East major priorities Over the most recent five years, 2020/21 to 2024/25, Sub-Saharan Africa received 38% of Canadian humanitarian assistance, with the Middle East and North Africa at 29%. Humanitarian assistance has declined for Asia (Afghanistan) and for Europe (Ukraine) in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

5. CSOs important channel of delivery CSOs delivered 33% of humanitarian assistance in 2024/25. Canadian CSOs delivered 20% of humanitarian assistance in 2024/25, with foreign CSOs delivering 13%. Multilateral organizations deliver two-thirds of Canadian humanitarian assistance.

6. Strong focus on protracted-crisis contexts In the past three years with data (2022/23 to 2024/25), at least three-quarters of Canada's humanitarian assistance has been directed to country contexts experiencing protracted crises (discounting regional allocations not directed at specific countries).

7. Implementing the triple nexus not on the agenda Canada is a signatory to the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Triple Nexus. The opportunity for strengthening GAC's triple nexus approach seems to have receded in 2025 and 2026 as most GAC institutional capacities shift to focus on avenues for the implementation of the trade-development nexus in GAC programming.

8. No major Canadian initiatives in response to crisis in the humanitarian system Canada reaffirmed its commitment to the Grand Bargain (2023-2026 iteration) and has committed to "support reforms that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system," but has not specified its preferences or proposals for reform in the context of an existential crisis in the humanitarian system.

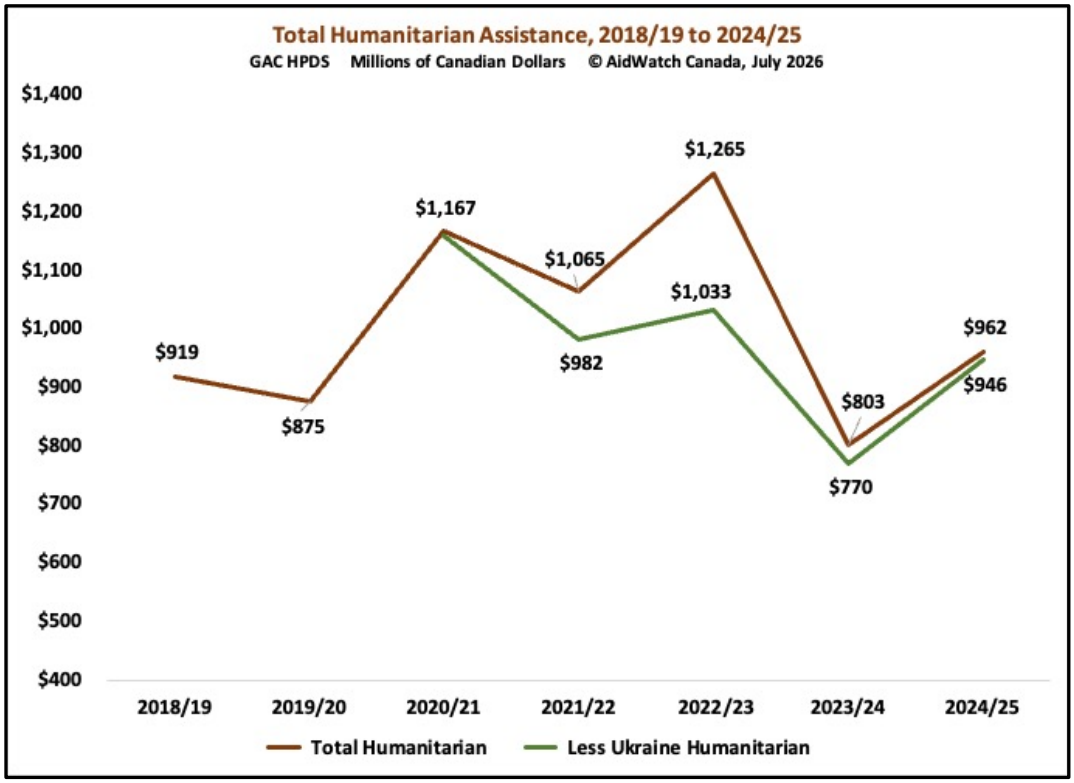
[2] **Briefing Note Two** is divided into seven sections, each examining different themes related to priorities in Canadian ODA. The sections are published separately but can be read individually or as a complete series.

1. Variable trends in the volume of humanitarian assistance since 2020/21

The dollar value of humanitarian assistance has fluctuated significantly since 2018/19. The large increase in 2022/23 was mostly related to a major humanitarian allocation to Ukraine in that year ($232 million), the first year of the Russian invasion. Syria ($110 million) and Lebanon ($43 million) were also large recipients of Canadian humanitarian assistance in 2022/23, driven by continued conflict, economic collapse and the earthquake in Türkiye.

Chart 6 suggests that if support for Ukraine is set aside, humanitarian assistance has been declining since 2020/21, but increased in 2024/25. In 2023/24, humanitarian assistance was at a low level ($803 million with Ukraine and $770 million without), with aid to Palestine increasing to $121 million, but humanitarian aid to Ukraine, Syria, Yemen and South Sudan all declining in that year. In 2024/25, humanitarian aid to Ukraine was negligible, but aid to Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia and Lebanon all had large increases.

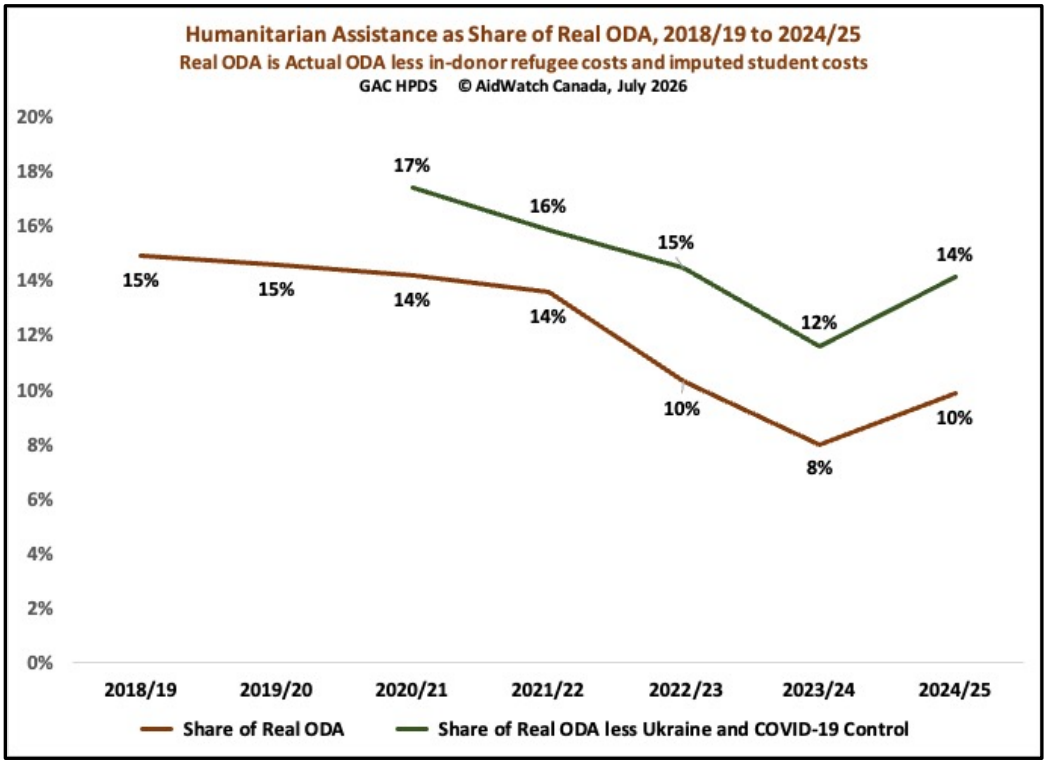
Chart 6: Trends in Volume for Canadian Humanitarian Assistance, 2018/19 to 2024/25



More than 90% of humanitarian assistance is delivered through Global Affairs Canada, with 4% to 7%, depending on the year, delivered through Finance Canada's allocations to the World Bank's concessional International Development Association (IDA) window.

As a share of Real ODA,[3] humanitarian assistance, however, has declined each year from 15% in 2018/19 to a low of 8% in 2023/24, before increasing to 10% in 2024/25. (**Chart 7**) Removing the extraordinary allocations for Ukraine in recent years, humanitarian assistance was 17% of Real ODA in 2020/21, declining to 12% in 2023/24 and increasing to 14% in 2024/25, a share equivalent to its pre-Covid share in 2019/20 (15%).

Chart 7: Humanitarian Assistance as a Share of Real ODA



[3] Real ODA is Total ODA less in-donor refugee costs. Allocations for support for Ukraine have been discounted, particularly in 2020/21 to 2022/23, to allow more accurate comparisons with earlier years. It is not possible to disaggregate the impact of Covid-19 Control within humanitarian assistance. There were some increases in "Basic Health Care in Emergencies" in the Covid pandemic years, which is likely related to the pandemic.

2. Canada ranks in the top 10 among its DAC peers in volume of humanitarian assistance

In recent years, Canada ranks 7th among DAC providers in its annual gross disbursements to humanitarian assistance and has provided approximately 2.4% of humanitarian assistance between 2020 and 2024. The United States, EU Institutions and Germany are the main humanitarian donors, accounting for 74% of bilateral humanitarian assistance over these five years. (See **Table 4**)

In recent years, Canada has not kept pace with DAC total humanitarian assistance. Its share of this assistance has been declining since 2022, from 3.4% that year to 2.2% in 2023, and 1.6% in 2024.

Table 4: Top Ten DAC Providers for Humanitarian Assistance (2020 to 2024 average)

Millions of US 2022 dollars (five-year average), Gross Disbursement

Ranking	Provider	Humanitarian Assistance	Share of Total Humanitarian Assistance
1	United States	$14,897	53.0%
2	EU Institutions	$3,369	12.0%
3	Germany	$2,603	9.3%
4	United Kingdom	$1,031	3.7%
5	Japan	$720	2.6%
6	Norway	$698	2.5%
7	**Canada**	**$667**	**2.4%**
8	Switzerland	$583	2.1%
9	Netherlands	$434	1.5%
10	Denmark	$424	1.5%

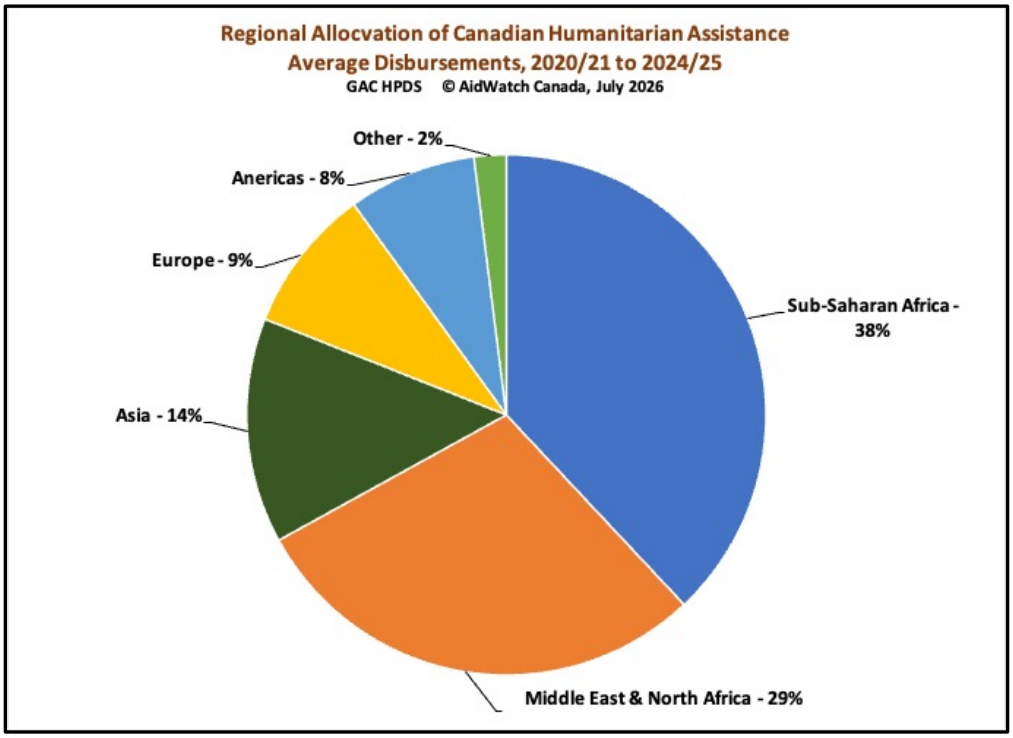
Source: DAC CRS

U.S. humanitarian assistance collapsed in 2025. When this assistance is discounted over the past five years, Canada's share of total humanitarian assistance increased from 2.4% to 6.8%.

3. Regional allocation of humanitarian assistance continues to focus on Sub-Saharan Africa

Over the most recent five-year period, 2020/21 to 2024/25, Sub-Saharan Africa received 38% of Canadian humanitarian assistance, with the Middle East and North Africa at 29%. (**Chart 8**) Although this share for the Middle East has been increasing in recent years, particularly for Palestine, this increase has not been at the expense of Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa received 41% of humanitarian assistance in 2024/25 and the Middle East, 34%. Rather, humanitarian assistance has declined for Asia (Afghanistan) and for Europe (Ukraine) in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Chart 8: Regional Allocation of Canadian Humanitarian Assistance



4. Humanitarian assistance has been concentrated in countries with protracted crises

Protracted crises are country contexts with high levels of political, social, and economic fragility, in which a significant portion of the population is vulnerable to death, disease, and breakdown of their livelihoods, over a prolonged period, often due to conflict, contested governance or economic collapse.[4] The selection of countries experiencing protracted crises for the analysis below is derived from countries that have had a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) under the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for a minimum of five years. See **Annex One** for a list of these countries in 2024/25.

In the past three years with data (2022/23 to 2024/25), at least three-quarters of Canada's humanitarian assistance has been directed to country contexts experiencing protracted crises (discounting regional allocations not directed at specific countries).

Top Ten Recipients of Canadian Humanitarian Assistance, 2024/25 (millions of Canadian dollars)

Syria	$99.3	Afghanistan	$34.5
Palestine	$84.5	DRC	$32.3
Yemen	$70.6	South Sudan	$29.3
Sudan	$61.0	Somalia	$26.6
Ethiopia	$57.3		
Lebanon	$55.6		

[4] Humanitarian Coalition, "Protracted Crises," undated, accessed at https://www.humanitariancoalition.ca/protracted-crises.

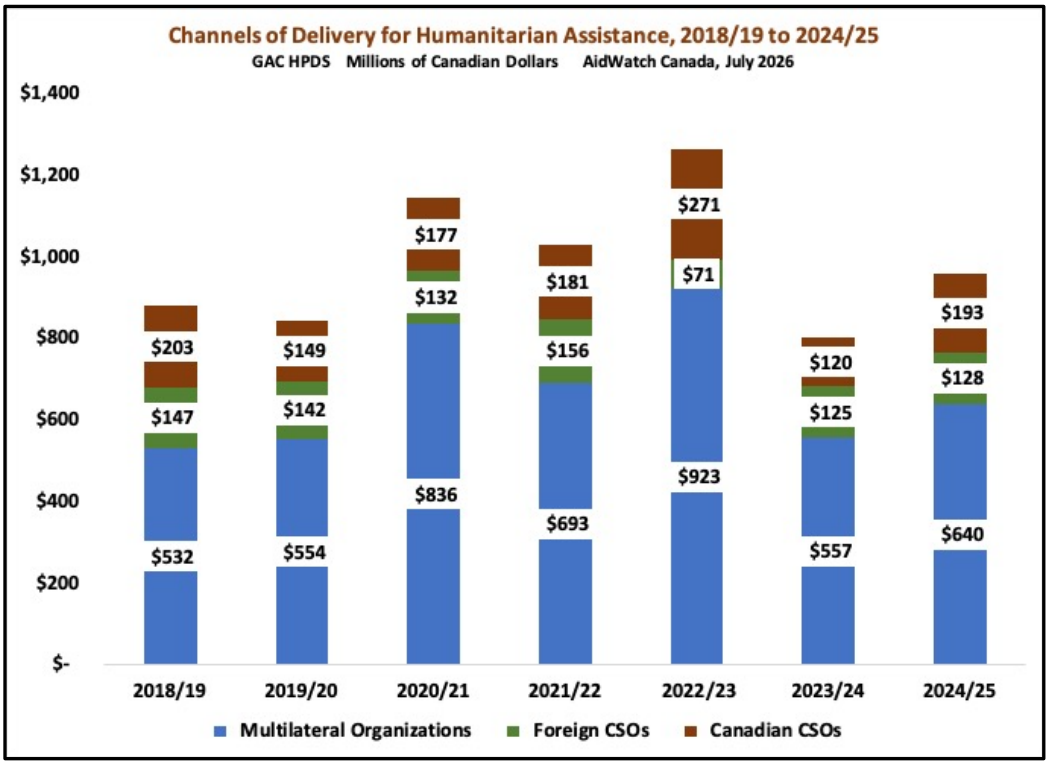
In 2024/25, nine of the top ten country recipients of humanitarian assistance were among the countries experiencing protracted crises (Lebanon is the only exception).

5. Channels of delivery for humanitarian assistance: Multilateral organizations predominant, but assistance through CSOs averages more than 30% in the most recent five-year period.

Humanitarian assistance delivered by CSOs has varied by year but overall has averaged around $310 million per year over the five most recent years (2020/21 to 2024/25). This assistance has been delivered by both Canadian and Foreign CSOs. (**Chart 9)** The fluctuation in humanitarian disbursements through Canadian CSOs has ranged from a high of $271 million in 2022/23 to a low of $120 million the next year, 2023/24. The most recent five-year average for foreign CSOs has been $122 million.

Multilateral channels have been the predominant modality for delivering Canadian humanitarian assistance, ranging from a high of $923 million in 2022/23 to a low of $557 million in 2023/24. The most recent five-year average is $730 million, which accounts for 69% of this assistance over the five years.

Chart 9: Channels for Canadian Humanitarian Assistance, Volumes, 2018/19 to 2024/25



Overall, CSOs delivered 33% of humanitarian assistance in 2024/25. Canadian CSOs delivered 20% of humanitarian assistance in 2024/25, with foreign CSOs delivering 13%. There is significant variability in delivery channels between years, and between Canadian and Foreign CSOs. (See **Table 5)**

Table 5: Humanitarian Assistance Delivery Channels: Share of Total Humanitarian Assistance

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Multilateral Organizations	63%	72%	65%	73%	69%	66%
Canadian CSOs	17%	15%	17%	21%	15%	20%
Foreign CSOs	16%	11%	15%	6%	16%	13%
All CSOs	33%	26%	32%	27%	31%	33%

Source: GAC Historical Projects Data Set

This assistance is concentrated among several large Canadian CSOs for which humanitarian assistance from GAC makes up a large share of their revenue. Five organizations – Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CARE Canada, the Canadian Red Cross, Action Against Hunger and the Humanitarian Coalition – delivered 53% of humanitarian assistance by Canadian CSOs in 2024/25. In previous years, World Vision Canada and Doctors Without Borders also ranked among the top 10 recipients of GAC humanitarian assistance. (See **Table 6**)

Table 6: GAC Disbursements for Canadian CSOs in Humanitarian Assistance, 2024/25

Canadian Foodgrains Bank	$27.0	14%
CARE Canada	$20.7	11%
Canadian Red Cross	$19.7	10%
Action Against Hunger	$18.5	10%
Humanitarian Coalition	$15.2	8%
Oxfam Canada	$12.6	7%
Oxfam Québec	$10.2	5%
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	$9.3	5%
Save the Children Canada	$8.5	4%
Plan International Canada	$8.2	4%
Top Ten	**$149.9**	**78%**
Total Canadian Civil Society Humanitarian	$193.0	

Similarly, humanitarian assistance through Foreign CSOs is also very concentrated, with the International Committee of the Red Cross responsible for 54% of this assistance on average between 2020/21 and 2024/25. The International Medical Corps, the International Rescue Committee, and the Norwegian Refugee Council were also strongly represented among foreign CSOs receiving GAC humanitarian disbursements. The Bangladeshi CSO, BRAC, registered among the top ten foreign CSOs in 2020/21.

More than two-thirds of Canada's humanitarian assistance is delivered by multilateral organizations. Among these organizations, the World Food Program is responsible for 35%, UNHCR for another 15%, UNICEF for 6%, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for 14% in 2024/25. Together they account for 70% of humanitarian assistance through multilateral organizations. (**Table 7**) These organizations have figured prominently in GAC disbursements since 2020/21.

Table 7: GAC Disbursements for Multilateral Delivery Channels in Humanitarian Assistance, 2024/25

WFP - World Food Programme	$225.7	35%
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	$96.2	15%
OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	$88.5	14%
IDA – International Development Association (World Bank)	$62.2	10%
UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees	$43.1	7%
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund	$38.3	6%
CERF - Central Emergency Response Fund	$39.4	6%
WHO - World Health Organization	$17.4	3%
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund	$9.2	1%
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme	$7.9	1%
Top Ten	**$627.9**	**98%**
Total Multilateral Humanitarian	$639.5	

7. Implementing the Triple Nexus approach has receded as a priority for GAC in 2026

The Triple Nexus is an overarching approach to protracted humanitarian crises, which links humanitarian and development action with the inclusion of peace initiatives. The focus is on coordination, collective outcomes for better programming and flexible financing, with strong emphasis on inclusion and gender equality as well as shifting power to local actors. Canada is a signatory to the 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Triple Nexus and is thereby obliged to "do its best to fully implement" its commitments in a more holistic way of working in fragile and conflict affected contexts.[5]

At its core, the triple nexus approach is about systemic change in the way practitioners work together at different levels, but particularly the country level. A 2024 DAC five-year review of the implementation of the Recommendation concluded that overall progress remains very uneven, with few examples of effective nexus coordination at the country level: "The full potential of the DAC Recommendation will not be achieved without fundamental change in the current crisis response models and architecture. … By and large, the international community's current crisis response model broadly maintains programming and financing as separate segmented – rather than complementary – processes."[6] While acknowledging that these are complex contexts on the ground, providers have often lacked political will, appropriate funding mechanisms, and a risk appetite to invest in fragile and conflict-affected contexts in ways that address root causes.

[5] OECD DAC, Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, OECD Legal Instrument, 2019, accessed at https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

[6] See the summary report of the five-year review: OECD DAC, 2024. "Report on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL, accessed at https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL/en/pdf

GAC's current practice in implementation of triple nexus approaches is in keeping with the pace of its peers.[7] Following a period of coordinated efforts within the Ministry, since late 2022, GAC's engagement has been characterized by a weak "decentralized approach" in which the triple nexus approach is largely invisible. Within GAC there is a knowledge gap on its current implementation in different country contexts.

The September 2024 reorganization of GAC, bringing together seven Bureaus under a new International Assistance Partnerships and Programming Branch, including Peace and Security Programming, could have been an opportunity to reinvigorate cross-departmental processes to advance the triple nexus approach, not only in programming but also in appropriate financing modalities for partners. But this opportunity seems to have receded in 2025 and 2026 as most GAC institutional capacities shift to focus on avenues for the implementation of the trade-development nexus in GAC programming beyond humanitarian assistance.

At the global level GAC officials remain involved in policy discussions, whether at the DAC's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) or the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, which Canada co-chaired until recently.

GAC has reported that its humanitarian financing has become more flexible and multi-year. In 2020, 58% of its humanitarian funding was multi-year, and over 35% was in the form of flexible funding (unearmarked and softly earmarked), exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 30%. In 2023 approximately two-thirds of funding was provided through multi-year agreements. It was also indicated that recent agreements include provisions to directly support overhead costs of local implementing partners (up to 7%). (Private communication from GAC)

GAC's approach to implementing the triple nexus is largely shaped by the fact that GAC humanitarian and development assistance is mainly delivered through intermediary organizations (multilateral or CSOs). GAC's ability to affect change is derived mainly from its influence on policies and practices within relevant UN organizations, in policy discussions at the World Bank, or in other UN fora. Its impact on CSOs is highly dependent on policy frameworks, program modalities, and fiduciary requirements that shape and enable CSOs in implementing a triple nexus approach in their programming. Canadian CSOs have faced many challenges over the past five years in this regard.

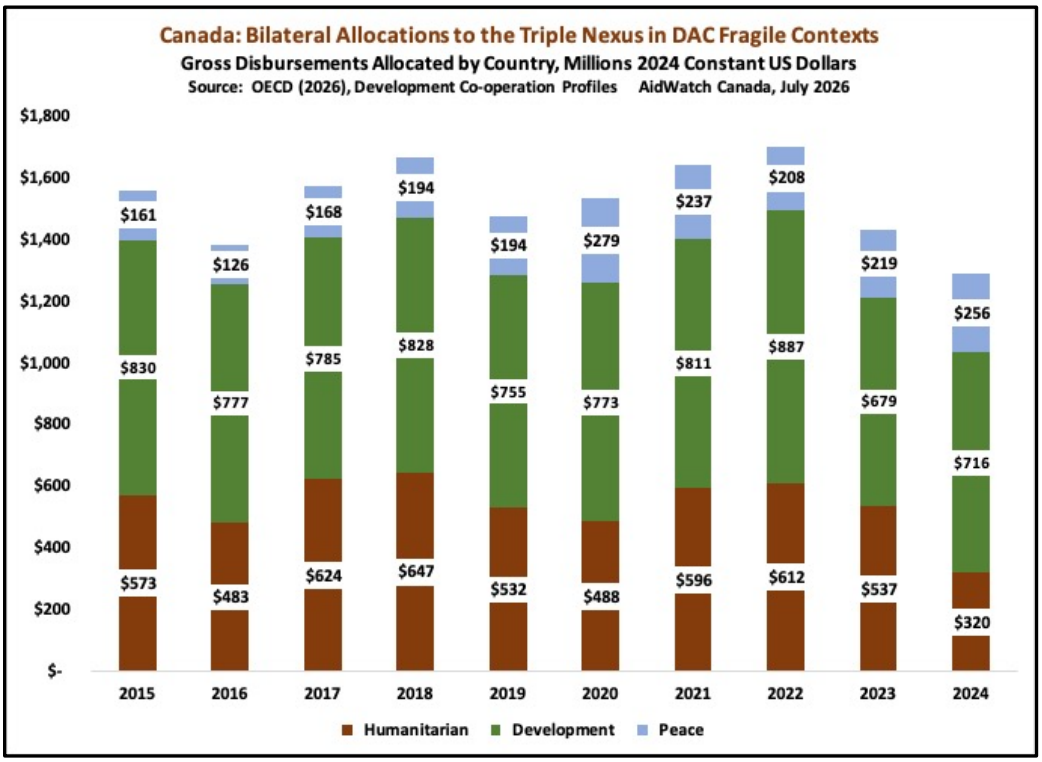
Nevertheless, the recent study of Canadian CSO experience in triple nexus programming revealed a rich experience. The research found that experience in implementation of a double nexus approach (humanitarian – development) has been long-standing among Canadian CSOs, but with growing, if incomplete, implementation of the triple nexus by a significant group of Canadian humanitarian actors.[8]

[7] See Molly den Heyer and Brian Tomlinson, "A review of Canadian CSO experience in Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Programming in fragile and conflict affected countries: A study commissioned by the CSO Nexus Working Group of the Canadian Food Security Policy Group, September 2024, accessed at www.aidwatchcanada.ca.

[8] See Molly den Heyer and Brian Tomlinson, op. cit.

Current data does not allow for the identification of Canadian nexus programming. However, DAC sector codes do give a picture of the relative levels of finance for the three nexus pillars. (**Chart 10**) These allocations, however, are evidence of financing for the three pillars in DAC-defined fragile contexts, but are not an indication that a triple nexus approach has been implemented.

Chart 10: Canada's Bilateral Aid to DAC Fragile Contexts (Triple Nexus Pillars), 2015 to 2024



According to the DAC, Canada's overall support for fragile contexts is shrinking. In 2024, 19% of Canada's bilateral aid (US$1.3 billion) was directed to finance initiatives in fragile contexts, down from 24% and US$1.7 billion in 2022. Twenty-five per cent of this ODA in 2024 was provided as humanitarian assistance, a decrease from 37% in 2023, while 19% was allocated to peace, an increase from 15% in 2023. Eight per cent (8%) went to conflict prevention, a subset of contributions to peace, representing an increase from 4% in 2023. The majority of finance in fragile contexts focused on development objectives (55% in 2024 and 47% in 2023).[9]

Locally-led initiatives are a critical element in effective implementation of a Triple Nexus approach.[10]

[9] OECD DAC, *Development Co-operation Profiles*, 2026, Canada, Bilateral ODA in Fragile Contexts, June 2026, accessed July 2026 at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/development-co-operation-profiles_04b376d7-en/canada_0c742aaa-en.html#section-d1e1052. For the DAC methodology in measuring the peace component of the triple nexus, see OECD DAC, "Peace and Official Development Assistance," October 2023, accessed at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/peace-and-official-development-assistance_fccfbffc-en.html.

[10] For the most recent (2025) self assessments by humanitarian actors, including Canada, in implementing Grand Bargain commitments, including allocating at least 25% of humanitarian funding as directly as possible to local and

Canada provides little direct support for local CSOs implementing humanitarian efforts on the ground. But in this regard, GAC sees the UN Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) as a major tool for advancing localization in humanitarian assistance. Canada has provided increased support to 17 UN CBPFs and in 2026 was a top-10 donor to CBPFs.[11] The CBPFs have strict rules about the make-up of their advisory boards, which include CSO representation and increasing targets for local CSOs. It is estimated that 46% of all CBPF funding was channeled to local organizations in 2025. However, it is also noted that these funds are concentrated among a few organizations in each country, thus overstating the breadth of the reach to local organizations.[12]

There may also be a number of GAC local humanitarian initiatives with CSOs, including a "pooled fund for localising the Rohingya response" created in 2022 with BRAC in Bangladesh. It is described as a "first-of-its-kind" for localizing humanitarian responses with local Bangladeshi CSOs.[13]

8. A crisis in the humanitarian system: Where does Canada stand?

The humanitarian system is in deep crisis in 2026. The crisis has been precipitated by the collapse of USAID in 2025, responsible for 40% of humanitarian assistance, but also by Germany, which cut its humanitarian assistance by half, and a decline in France. The OECD DAC projects that humanitarian assistance in 2025 fell by 36% to US$15 billion. Between 2024 and 2026, the DAC predicts a collapse of more than 40% in humanitarian support.[14] At the same time, intensifying conflicts around the world drive urgent humanitarian need and displacement. The UN estimates that more than 250 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2026, requiring a minimum of US$33 billion in response, but reaching only 143 million of this population. The funding gap for 2025 was US$32 billion.[15]

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national actors, see https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/grand-bargain-self-reporting-cycle-2025.

[11] See https://www.unocha.org/country-based-pooled-funds.

[12] See Caitlin Sturridge, Megan Daigle, Mike Pearson, Nicholas Veerapen, "Country-based pooled funds… the key to unlocking localised funding, or just another blunt instrument?," ODI Global, March 2026, accessed at https://odi.org/en/insights/country-based-pooled-funds-localisation/**.** CBPFs have always been out of reach for many LNAs – particularly those that are smaller or unregistered, unable to meet onerous and complex application processes, or without a track record of UN partnerships.

[13] See "Project profile — Pooled Fund for Localizing the Rohingya Response," GAC Project Browser, accessed August 29, 2024 at https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/p010753001?wbdisable=true.

[14] OECD DAC, "ODA in 2025 – Preliminary Data: Detailed Summary Note," April 9, 2026, accessed at https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2026)8/en/pdf. OECD DAC, "ODA projections for 2026 and the near-term: Implications for vulnerable countries and sectors," June 19, 2026, accessed at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oda-projections-for-2026-and-the-near-term_d7c74fa2-en.html.

[15] UN OCHA, "Global Humanitarian Overview, 2026," accessed at https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2026-enesfr. Irwin Roy and Will Worley, "Five Takeaways from the UN's aid plans for 2026," DevEx, December 8, 2025, accessed at https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2025/12/08/five-takeaways-uns-aid-plans-2026. Humanitarian Response Network of Canada, "The Global Humanitarian Context: An updated analysis," May 2026, accessed at https://humanitarianresponse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-HRN-Landscape-analysis.pdf.

The crisis is not just one of finance, but also the continued legitimacy of a system. It remains highly centralized in UN institutions, while the international community's response to genocide in Gaza raises questions about its neutrality and impartiality (contrasting responses to Ukraine and Gaza). Respect for international humanitarian law is systematically being violated, with attacks on aid workers rising. Along with funding cuts, weakening monitoring and oversight functions leaves room for increased impunity by abusive regimes.

Little reform has taken place since the 2016 Humanitarian Summit and the agreed Grand Bargain, a menu of reforms with a central promise of getting 25% of funding to local and national humanitarian actors. The current estimate is about 2.5%, with more than 60% of finance directed to UN agencies, including UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF.

Responding to the financial crisis, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, bringing together UN and non-UN partners, developed a Humanitarian Reset Roadmap, which called for hyper-prioritization of available resources, alongside reforms to strengthen partnerships, resources, efficiency, data and innovation.[16] Others have issued calls for deeper reform with proposals to move from a system with international institutions at the centre to an "ecosystem" approach, with the former playing a supportive gap-filling role, reimagining OCHA cluster coordination as locally- or nationally-led rather than UN-centred, and building several large global south-led pooled funds. These proposals face stiff institutional resistance. There are similar calls for diversified funders, including non-DAC providers, with fairer governance of funding mechanisms. Protracted crises require renewed attention to implementation of triple nexus approaches. Restoring trust could involve exempting humanitarian resolutions from UN Security Council vetoes. There is a sense that the financial crisis may compel real consideration of reforms, although the directions remain uncertain.[17]

Canada has reaffirmed its commitment to the Grand Bargain (2023-2026 iteration), and has committed

[16] Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), "Humanitarian Reset," no date, accessed at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/humanitarian-reset.

[17] The Advisory Panel on Humanitarian Action, "From 'ego-systems' to 'eco-systems': renewing humanitarian action," ODI & NEAR, November 2025, accessed at https://odi.org/en/publications/from-ego-systems-to-ecosystems-renewing-humanitarian-action/. Melissa Fundira, "Rethinking Humanitarianism: An interview with UN relief chief Tom Fletcher," New Humanitarian, July 10, 2025, accessed at https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/podcast/2025/07/10/rethinking-humanitarianism-interview-un-relief-chief-tom-fletcher. Lydia Poole, "The Big Humanitarian Rethink," Embodying Change Podcast, April 25, 2025, accessed at https://podcasts.apple.com/fr/podcast/60-the-big-humanitarian-rethink-with-lydia-poole/id1510936283?i=1000704297604. Pierre Micheletti, "2025: The humanitarian movement's 'great depression'," Humanitarian Alternatives, Issue 30, November 2025, accessed at https://www.alternatives-humanitaires.org/en/2025/11/27/2025-the-humanitarian-movements-great-depression/. Caroline Brando, "Rethinking the foundations of a global humanitarian order in jeopardy," Humanitarian Alternatives, Issue 30, November 2025, accessed at https://www.alternatives-humanitaires.org/en/2025/11/27/rethinking-the-foundations-of-a-global-humanitarian-order-in-jeopardy/. Damian Lilly, "One Compact Too Far: UN80 and the Humanitarian Reform Malaise," IPI Global Observatory, October 2, 2025, access at https://theglobalobservatory.org/2025/10/one-compact-too-far-un80-and-the-humanitarian-reform-malaise/.

to “support reforms that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system”.[18] It has protected humanitarian assistance in its 2026/27 to 2029/30 aid cuts. But to date there have been no Canadian Government proposals for reform.

The Canadian CSO Humanitarian Response Network, hosted by Cooperation Canada, has set out a number of reform proposals in its recent assessment of the Global Humanitarian Context. It calls on the Canadian Government to 1) increase humanitarian financing particularly strengthening “direct and accessible funding mechanisms” for both international and local CSOs; 2) align assistance with local priorities, through flexible implementation of the triple nexus; 3) build coalitions to address root causes, including conflict prevention and addressing the political, social, and economic drivers of instability; and 4) advocate for International Humanitarian Law, including increasing support for the International Criminal Court investigations and halting arms exports where there is a risk of facilitating violations.[19]

[18] Government of Canada, “2026/27 Departmental Plan,” Global Affairs Canada, accessed at https://international.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/corporate/reports/departmental-plan/global-affairs-2026-2027-departmental-plan.

[19] Humanitarian Response Network of Canada, “The Global Humanitarian Context: An updated analysis,” May 2026, accessed at https://humanitarianresponse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-HRN-Landscape-analysis.pdf.

Annex One
Countries Experiencing Protracted Crises, 2024/25

Countries with protracted crises are those that have had a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) under the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for a minimum of five years.

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ethiopia
Haiti
Mali
Mozambique
Myanmar
Niger
Nigeria
Occupied Palestinian territory
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen

Source: OCHA, Financial Tracking Services, accessed July 2026 at https://fts.unocha.org/?_gl=1*1ar4va7*_gcl_au*Njg0MDE5NjQuMTc4MzY5OTUyMw..*_ga*MTM0MzU0MzczOS4xNzgzNjk5NDY3*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*czE3ODM3MDM0MjUkbzIkZzEkdDE3ODM3MDM0MzIkajUzJGwwJGgw