

January 17, 2017

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C.
Minister of International Development and La Francophonie
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Madame Bibeau,

RE: The Invisible Mosaic

We write to you well in advance of the upcoming High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York, July 10-19th 2017 in order to flag recent developments that we think might be of interest to Canada, including the challenge of reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The world appears to be experiencing a step backward away from global citizenship toward increasing nationalism, as we are sure you are fully aware. As the British Columbia Council for *International Cooperation* we are pleased to hear our Prime Minister firmly establish a Canadian affirmation to support multilateralism, increase our role at the UN, realign our aid efforts, and embrace the 17 SDGs. We congratulate you on your efforts to consult with Canadians in this regard through the International Assistance Review and look forward to the new five-year framework as well as a new financial commitment in Budget 2017 toward achieving the long sought after goal of 0.7% GNI.

We wish to draw your attention to what has been affectionately dubbed here in British Columbia "[The Invisible Mosaic](#)." Over the past year, our staff have driven over 7500 km, held 48 roundtables, and visited over 30 communities. That is a lot of time on the road, in every corner of BC, talking to mayors, city councillors, NGO leaders, planners, academics, the private sector, and just about anyone else who cares about the SDGs and global cooperation. It has given us valuable insight into how Canadians feel about the SDGs and how their work is making a change in the world. We were pleased that these efforts garnered the attention of then Parliamentary Secretary Karina Gould, the head of your SDG task force and Foreign Affairs staff, with visits to our office.

In one three week period in November we made over 1400 phone calls using rotating teams that methodically went through lists and lists of people who might be interested in the SDGs. These were not robo-calls. They were, at times, long drawn out philosophical discussions on why the SDGs might be of interest to someone in Merritt or Kamloops or Smithers. Over **600 leaders** in BC spent more than 3 hours each in workshops exploring the global goals with us in 2016.

Our teams of interns and staff have uncovered over 2200 groups *in BC alone* that are currently working on the goals and have used this information to create a searchable [digital map](#) that grows by the day. I invite you to explore it. We have been invited to share this process with our neighbours in the Yukon and

Washington and were asked to hold a roundtable as far away as Whitehorse. This year we are stretching our imaginations toward Alberta and the rest of Canada when it comes to mapping social change. Within 24 months we hope to map social change organizations internationally.

Our current campaign, **BC 2030**, focuses on the upcoming provincial elections and aims to ensure that the SDGs and BC's potential leadership on Agenda 2030 become key discussion points for British Columbians and their candidates. Working on this campaign has highlighted key recommendations we believe are important for moving Canada forward as an SDG leader, including:

1. Canada should align its reporting at the HLPF on national progress toward the SDGs with civil society efforts to do the same. BCCIC has extensive experience with the SDGs and looks forward to Canada reporting on national progress in July this year, either in a coordinated way or through shadow reporting. The specific SDGs due to be reviewed in 2017 include:

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

SDG 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. This goal will be considered each year.

Obviously there is much to discuss when it comes to mutually agreed upon national and subnational indicators for Canada. Now is not too soon to plan with civil society how this might unfold and to determine a mutually beneficial process. We wish to congratulate you in advance of the IAR for your personal and public commitment to SDG goal 5.

2. Canada, with GAC as lead on the SDGs, should begin now to create a multi-scaled approach to reporting and governing on the SDGs (including the provinces, municipalities, and First Nations governance structures). There is a need for policy coherence and federal leadership on the SDGs as many of the goals fall under provincial or municipal jurisdiction. Time is of the essence and we understand you and GAC are the lead agency to spearhead this. We will continue to meet with the province and local governments here in BC and encourage further dialogue. We are happy to discuss potential ideas and forums with you at any time.

3. We continue to encourage youth participation at the UN and request that you implement a way to ensure that youth attend the HLPF and subsequent General Assembly to be mentored in

the process of SDG participation. As you know we have made every effort to independently make this happen and commend your work with UNAC to make sure youth attended UNGA Third Committee meeting in October 2016. Thank you for that effort.

4. In a similar vein, we also feel that civil society participation at the UN as part of the official Canadian delegation is a very healthy way to partner with CSOs in Canada. Again, now is not too soon to plan for July and September. Attending the HLPF requires either ECOSOC status (which BCCIC applied for in 2016) or working directly with a country delegation. At this point we recommend discussing a process to ensure self-selected civil society involvement in the 2017 HLPF with direct government sponsorship and status.

We feel that our experience here at BCCIC engaging the public and key decision makers regarding the SDGs is an important one. We have learned many lessons that are valuable to those hoping to promote the 17 goals at a variety of scales and look forward to sharing them with you and your colleagues. As a first step, we will be holding a brown bag presentation with Global Affairs staff tentatively scheduled for February 15th at Sussex Drive and invite you to attend. We also find ourselves in a steep learning curve on how best to engage the Canadian public on the SDGs and look forward to learning from Global Affairs and others in this regard.

We hope you are able to promote dialogue with civil society on these issues, partner with CSOs in the coming year, and continue to make the SDGs the foundational framework for Canada's global cooperation.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Simpson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Simpson

c.c. Hon. Karina Gould, Vincent Rigby, Elissa Goldberg, Ariel Delouya, Dragica Stanivuk