

Results Canada Speech

Intro

In September 2000, world leaders from 189 countries recognized the urgency of freeing their fellow citizens from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty in the Millennium Declaration. From this emerged the Millennium Development Goals, firmly committing governments to meeting and exceeding an ambitious set of targets by 2015, including halving the proportion of the population whose income is less than \$ 1 a day and those who suffer from hunger. Two years later, the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, reaffirmed these goals and pledged (“challenged”) the world community to expand resources for the eradication of poverty in the developing world. However, the promised pledges which would ensure that “globalization becomes a positive force for all of the world’s people”, still remain unfulfilled. Today, more than 1 billion people continue to live on less than US\$1 a day, one in five children do not have access to primary education, and 11 million children under the age of five still die every year from preventable diseases! What is preventing us from meeting the goals when we live in a world that has the resources, technology and knowledge to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty? *One of the major obstacles is the lack of firm political will from our leaders to deliver on their promises.* They fail to reconcile rhetoric with action!

Advocacy

Advocacy groups help us hold our leaders accountable. Advocacy is the tool we use in our democracy to bring about improvements in policy. When there is a gap between policy and practice, advocacy groups help point out those gaps so that they can be closed. When policy makers have a poor understanding of the needs of the populace, advocacy groups educate them, explaining the simplicity or complexity of the people’s problems. And when policy makers do not understand the full implications of the policies, advocacy groups carry out research and suggest new policies. Simply put, change for the better would not happen without advocacy. However, advocacy becomes hubristic, empty babble when there are no results.

The RESULTS organization recognizes the pivotal role advocacy plays in addressing the root causes of the world’s problems. Thus RESULTS works in the political arena advocating on behalf of the poorest people in the world, speaking out for those rarely –if ever– heard voices. RESULTS strives to ensure that their advocacy does not become hubristic babble. Their efforts have not gone unrewarded. In its infant stages in 1988, RESULTS Canada became the first Citizens’ group in any country to make an organized effort to lobby its government to support the gathering of world leaders to improve child development and survival this initiative. Canada ended up playing a vital role in organizing the World Summit for Children. Ten years later, RESULTS Canada’s successful year-long campaign insisting that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) reinstate its child immunization program resulted in a new \$50 million program. This saved at least one hundred and twenty thousand lives each year in poor countries around the world.

In 2002, after years of intensive advocacy by RESULTS, Canada announced \$80 million in extra funding for tuberculosis programs in poor countries. In May 2003, the Canadian government more than doubled funding for the Canadian International Immunization Program, a program originally created by RESULTS' advocacy in 1997. Funding will increase from \$50 million to \$110 million over five years. Because of RESULTS, at least 250,000 children each year will be saved from death due to preventable diseases such as measles, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio. And the list goes on...

What makes RESULTS unique is not that they advocate, but that they advocate successfully. They have forged a strong rapport with the Canadian government that permits them greater accessibility to Canadian policy-makers. Yet they are sensitive to the ever-changing needs of the poor and flexible enough to adopt new, ingenious strategies in meeting these needs. They have helped Canada to look beyond its borders to –in many cases– lead the global community in the fight against poverty and diseases. RESULTS understands that though humanitarian efforts on the micro level are important, macro level efforts are just as vital. Much of the humanitarian aid that organizations provide is financed by the public sector. To ensure that funds are available, RESULTS has directed its efforts to lobby the Canadian government and challenged other national and international governing bodies to allocate and deliver much needed aid. And so when one donates money to RESULTS, RESULTS is in turn using that donation to generate a larger allocation of funds on the national level to fight poverty and hunger. This is a substantial return on your gift!

Malaria and Micro-credit

RESULTS has achieved much, however, it is not enough.

According to conservative estimates more than 3,000 people die of malaria every day, 71% of all deaths are in children under 5. There are 300-500 million reported cases of malaria each year, 90% of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. What is most disheartening is that this is a preventable and curable disease. Up to US\$2 billion will be needed each year to achieve the goal of halving the burden of malaria by 2010. Currently, only US\$600 million is being spent, this is a global funding gap of US\$1.4 billion. The Canadian Development Agency spends less than \$6 million annually for malaria, compared to \$35 million for tuberculosis and \$80 million for HIV/AIDS. We have work to do. Note that increasing government spending on malaria does not mean reallocating money from HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis to malaria, but generating new funding for it.

Recently, scientists have announced a major advance in the war on malaria. A vaccine has displayed promising results in a trial among Mozambican children, reducing a child's risk of developing malaria by 30%. A generic version of this therapy can cost as little as \$1.00 per course of treatment. Though the generic version is not yet widely available, researchers are hopeful this will happen by 2010. For the more than one billion people who live on less than \$1.00 per day, the cost of malaria drugs can mean the difference between life and death. Despite, the success in achieving the vaccine, more resources must be ready to help distribute the vaccine once it becomes widely available.

I personally understand the importance of securing resources for distribution. In 1998, I co-founded America Reads/South Africa Reads (ARSAR), a non-profit organization promoting K-12 literacy and access to primary education in South Africa and the United States through advocacy and book-drives. Traveling to 25 K-12 schools in 10 states throughout the U.S., I collected nearly 100,000 children's books for South African libraries serving rural schools. We never expected the shipping costs to be as high as they were and despite all of our efforts collecting books, most of them never left U.S. shores. If we had funds available for shipping and distribution, surely all of those books would be enjoyed by young South Africans as we speak. I have learned that help is useless if no one is there to give it; a cure is wasted if it stays in the hands of the well and never reaches the sick. Thus we must start what we finish.

Micro credit is another issue that requires ongoing support. We congratulate you for your achievements of reaching nearly half the 100 million poorest families with microcredit loans, but we are still not there. Microcredit involves loans of as little as \$50 to support small self-employed businesses, mostly run by women. Critics of micro-finance programs may argue that they are unsustainable and inefficient. However they cannot deny the success of these loans, which enjoy repayments rate of 98% or better. Microcredit has proven to be one of the most effective means of helping the poorest people on earth to lift themselves out of extreme poverty. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, an organization that fosters self-development for the poor through loans averaging less than \$100, is an example of a successful micro-credit lender. As of July, 2004, it has 3.7 million borrowers, 96 % of whom are women, with 1267 branches, providing services in 46,000 villages, covering more than 68 percent of the total villages in Bangladesh. Since its inception in 1979 it dispersed nearly \$4.5 billion dollars and enjoyed a 98.9% repayment rate. Grameen believes that charity is not an answer to poverty; it only helps poverty to continue by creating dependency. The poor have skills which remain unutilized or under-utilized, which if put to work can help them become self-sustaining. Grameen brought credit to the poor, women, and the illiterate by providing access to credit on reasonable terms enabling the poor to build on their existing skill to earn a better income in each cycle of loans. The lesson we learn from the Grameen Bank is that the promise of micro-finance is self-sustenance as the remedy for poverty, which doesn't just "give a man a fish, but teaches him how to fish."

At the Pan African Youth leadership Conference held in Dakar in June, we young leaders pledged in our declaration that we would take actions to be more responsible for our future. Micro-credit initiatives give us the hope that we will have the support to participate in the economy. Micro-credit institutions allow poor borrowers to bypass the difficulties of getting loans from private institutions that require collateral that many people do not have, guarantees that many cannot make, and exploitive expectations that many cannot meet, except the privileged few. Therefore we need your continued support in this effort.

Conclusion

Microcredit and malaria are examples of a larger conversation about the importance of partnership. Nothing can be achieved single-handedly. RESULTS understands this and works

diligently with the Canadian government and others –almost– in partnership to effect the change they seek on a global scale. We cannot overlook the progressive role Canada has played. Canada has led the international community in efforts to address global problems in the past largely through and due to partnerships. I cannot conclude without reflecting on the role Canada played in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

For almost 50 years, South Africa was ruled by apartheid — a brutal system of racial separation that kept the nation's black majority in poverty while a white minority held the wealth and power. Canada — like many nations — was slow to react but by the 1980s, she assumed a leading role enforcing sanctions against South Africa. As early as 1961 though Canada expressed its disapprobation of apartheid. The then Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker led other leaders from the Commonwealth of Nations in denouncing apartheid and upholding racial equality, causing South Africa to withdraw its application. In 1977 Canada funded numerous South African NGOs which challenged the apartheid system through the courts, through support for educational upgrading and other programs to promote a more equitable society. Canada also joined the Commonwealth boycott of aid to athletes or teams that competed in South Africa, and any event in Canada that allowed South African competitors.

In April 1994, Canada aided in development of an interim constitution and preparations for the first non-racial elections. Almost 150 Canadians served as election observers under bilateral, multilateral and NGO auspices. And again during the 1999 elections Canadians acted as observers. Since the 1994 elections, Canada has supported South Africa's re-entry into the broader range of multilateral organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Canada has worked closely with South Africa on important, multilateral issues, including the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, appropriate action taken against the military government in Nigeria in the context of the Commonwealth, and the implementation of the World Trade Organization. Neither has their relationship been uneven, for in 1997 South Africa played a prominent role in the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines and was one of the three initial signatories to the Convention at the Ottawa Conference in December 1997.

In conclusion, though the global challenges we face of poverty and disease seem daunting, we can overcome them. However, it requires all of our efforts and support. I see the particular urgency of your actions because it is mostly children and young people that are affected by poverty, HIV/AIDS and Malaria. Of the 6 billion people living in the world today, more than 50% of the population is below the age of 35. Almost half of the world's youth population lives in extreme poverty (living on less than \$1 a day) in India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Mexico. We need your support. Partner with RESULT as RESULT partners with the Canadian government, and as Canada partners with other countries and the UN. In this way we can hold our leaders accountable and in our own way make this world a better place to be for all of us to live, grow, and prosper. Thank you and I wish you God's speed in all your endeavors.