

**Bringing Gender Back into Canada's Engagement
in Fragile States:
Options for CIDA in a Whole-of-Government Approach**

Stephen Baranyi and Kristiana Powell
The North-South Institute
Ottawa, Canada
www.nsi-ins.ca

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Introduction

Over the past year the Government of Canada has formulated a multi-dimensional response to the challenges of failed and fragile states. The April 2005 International Policy Statement (IPS) commits Canada to a four-pronged approach:

- More rapid deployment of capable military and police forces for stabilization operations.
- Postwar governance assistance in areas like security sector reform.
- Postwar socio-economic recovery through development cooperation.
- Preventing state breakdown through diplomacy and long-term development.ⁱ

In the IPS CIDA is committed to contributing to whole-of-government responses in fragile states -- states that are unwilling or unable to guarantee the provision of basic human security, health care, education and livelihoods to most of their citizens.ⁱⁱ This will include increasing governance programming in areas like the rule of law, democratic development and ODA-eligible aspects of security sector reform (SSR). It will involve substantial investments in five fragile states: Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, the Palestinian Territories and Sudan. It will also involve integrating conflict-sensitivity in other CIDA programs, including some partnership countries which may have elements of failure and may be at risk of sliding into collapse in the future. The Agency is currently crafting a fragile states strategy to elaborate on these commitments.

Canada's emerging policies reflect approaches being developed elsewhere, from the World Bank's seminal work on low income countries under stress to the OECD Development Assistance Committee's work on difficult partnerships, the UK's strategy on countries at risk of instability and current proposals to establish a UN Peacebuilding Commission.ⁱⁱⁱ A recent study by the North-South Institute demonstrated that these emerging policy frameworks contain few considerations of the gender dimensions of state fragility, or the constraints/ opportunities for promoting gender equality in different states of fragility.^{iv}

This is worrisome for many reasons. All these institutions have committed themselves to promoting gender equality (GE) in many instances. They have officially recognized that gender equality is crucial for development. They have acknowledged that protecting women and promoting their participation is crucial to preventing conflict and building sustainable peace. Canada signed onto and even championed many of these international instruments. The 1995 Federal Plan for Gender Equality commits all government departments to integrating GE into their policies and programs.^v

The development chapter in Canada's IPS does contain gender equality commitments. However, the virtual silence on GE in the defence, diplomacy and commerce chapters of the IPS highlights the challenges facing advocates of gender equality in CIDA and elsewhere -- in formulating whole-of-government approaches to state fragility that meaningfully address GE priorities. The current draft CIDA strategy on fragile states also includes GE elements. The intent of this paper is to help strengthen these aspects

of CIDA's emerging policies on fragile states, enable CIDA to promote the closing of gaps between gender equality commitments and practice in all government departments, and assist it in engaging other partners in fragile states -- UN agencies, national governments and civil society organizations. As such the paper addresses three questions:

1. How can CIDA's existing policies and programming tools guide efforts to strengthen the gender equality dimensions of CIDA's work in fragile states?
2. What can key international instruments such as the Beijing Platform of Action and the DAC Guidelines on Gender Equality add in this regard?
3. What can CIDA do to help bring GE meaningfully into whole-of-government and multilateral processes vis-à-vis/in fragile states?

Building on CIDA's existing policies and tools

The cornerstone for GE programming in CIDA is the 1999 Policy on Gender Equality, which makes a compelling case for integrating gender equality into development programming and offers a host of practical tips for doing this across the board. Its core principle is simple: **“Gender equality must be considered as an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs and projects.”**^{vi} In other words GE is not an option; it is a must because of Canada's legal commitments and because a generation of experience has taught us that it is essential for effective, sustainable development.

The 1999 GE policy statement has been supplemented by two tools that are directly relevant to the challenges of bringing GE into programming in fragile states. The first is the 1999 Gender Equality and Peacebuilding Operational Framework.^{vii} The second is the 2003 Gender Equality and Humanitarian Assistance Guide.^{viii} These tools provide much insight into how men and women are affected differently by armed conflict and other emergencies. **In wars salient gender differences include:**

- Human rights: How men and women are affected differently by increases in human rights violations.
- Military activity: How they are affected differently by the recruitment of combatants or material shortages.
- Peace processes: How men and women have differential access to peace negotiations that shape the future of countries and the distribution of resources at different levels of society – from the state to the household.

In humanitarian crises men and women will experience vulnerability in different ways. Moreover their ability to respond effectively will also be influenced by gender, and by other factors such as their class, age, ethnicity and geographic location. Gender differences can be anticipated in the following areas:

- Human insecurity and resulting protection needs.
- Access to resources – from food aid to transportation.

- Assistance priorities – e.g. men’s demands for the restoration of property versus women and girls’ demands for physical protection.
- Access to decision-making processes in camps for displaced persons, in communities affected by crises and in national fora.

In theory, not all fragile states are affected by war or humanitarian crises. One can view state fragility as a spectrum, with states that are willing and able to guarantee most public goods to most of their citizens at one extreme (e.g. Costa Rica today), and states that have disappeared in all but name at the other extreme (e.g. Somalia in the 1990s). The objects of international concern are mainly those states that cluster towards the latter extreme. There is no widely accepted way of identifying such states, but recent lists such as the July 2005 US Fund for Peace Failed States Index suggest that many fragile states are affected by war and/or humanitarian crises.^{ix} All of Canada’s current five priority fragile states are affected by war and emergencies.

Nonetheless it is important for donors to develop policies and tools to understand and respond effectively to other states of fragility. From a GE perspective, this should include tools to anticipate gender differences in fragile states where there is little armed violence and no large-scale humanitarian crisis. Bolivia could be taken as an example of this situation given the virtual paralysis of national governance, the escalation of social protest and the economic downturn particularly since 2003. **In such fragile states gender differences might be both distinct from and similar to those flagged for wartime and humanitarian emergencies. They might include:**

- Economic disruption – e.g. predominantly male transportation workers and predominantly female agricultural workers might be affected differently by negative growth or the disruption of economic activity due to road blockages.
- Political mobilization – e.g. the mobilization of popular movements might open different kinds of doors for men and women as agents of change.
- Insecurity – e.g. the weakening ability of public security forces to enforce the rule of law in contested regions, or increased domestic violence resulting from decreased economic welfare, will also affect men and women differently.

The 1999 GE policy and these two tools also suggest **practical ways in which GE should and can be integrated into development programming**. These can be grouped under five headings: gender analysis, program design and implementation, sectoral entry points, policy dialogue, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

1. **Gender analysis** can sharpen our understanding of local contexts and help us identify opportunities for promoting both GE and state building. At the program pre-design or design stages this involves recognizing GE as a cross-cutting issue upfront and gathering sex-disaggregated data on:
 - The roles and relations between men and women and how this affects their access to resources and power.
 - The views of men and women related to the proposed intervention.
 - Social and cultural constraints on promoting gender equality.

- The capacity of potential partner institutions to promote GE.
2. **Program design and implementation** can be strengthened by integrating GE at the national and regional levels, and with multilateral or CSO partners. E.g.:
 - Involve women and men stakeholders in program design, implementation and assessment processes. Involve GE experts too, and give priority to strengthening partners' capacities to promote and implement GE.
 - Support organizational change that promotes GE.
 - Consider Canadian capacities to promote GE in the program.
 - Allocate adequate budgets to implement GE objectives.
 3. **Sectoral programming** can be enhanced by integrating GE. For example:
 - **Governance and human rights:** Support the capacity of women's organizations and state agencies such as police forces and human rights ombudspersons, to protect and promote women's rights including their right to be agents of change through democratic participation.
 - **Health:** Support agencies that can bring gender into the analysis of basic health care needs in IDP camps, or in urban areas affected by social protest, and the design of programs to meet different needs.
 - **Education:** Help partners and stakeholders assess obstacles to men and women's equal access to education in zones affected by war or by social conflict. Build their capacity to address these obstacles to GE in sector-wide education programs or in local education projects.
 - **Economic stabilization and recovery:** Support gender analysis at the design stage of private sector development projects to ensure that gender inequalities are not aggravated by such initiatives.
 - **Natural resource management and agriculture:** Support to full participation of women in the design of programs to provide food aid, reactivate rural agriculture and reform land tenure arrangements.
 3. **Policy dialogue** can also be used to advance gender equality. E.g.:
 - Address GE concerns with national governments, CSO partners and multilateral institutions -- e.g. donors can support national dialogues on measures to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.
 - Share good practices with partners, including participatory policy development and programming. Also help partners identify constraints and opportunities for GE programming.
 4. **Performance assessment** can also benefit from the integration of GE results:
 - Establish GE performance indicators at the design stage, in dialogue with stakeholders including women.^x
 - Gather appropriate baseline data upfront. Monitor GE performance against these benchmarks and indicators, in dialogue with stakeholders.
 - Monitor GE results across the board at the project, program, branch and corporate levels.

Tools and tips from the UN and the DAC

In addition to the commitments CIDA has made to GE in its 1999 Policy on Gender Equality and other tools, the GoC has made commitments to enhancing GE in development programming through the United Nations and the OECD DAC. By endorsing the 1995 Beijing Declaration, its Platform for Action and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), Canada agreed to promote the full and equal participation of women in decision-making, work toward the elimination of violence against women, and integrate gender in development policy and programming. These commitments were recently reinforced in declarations emerging from the Beijing + 10 in March 2005.

The Beijing Platform for Action and the 1999 DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation, work by the OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the 1997/2001 DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict provide insight into how these multilateral commitments to GE might be met in difficult contexts characterized by violent conflict, pervasive poverty and/or a weak or predatory state. These documents provide valuable tools and tips that can be used to reinforce CIDA's existing GE strategies and further enhance the Agency's work on integrating GE into policy and programming in fragile states. Insights from UN and DAC strategies fall under three categories: building capacity for analysis and advocacy, promoting GE in whole-of-government strategies, and integrating GE into multilateral and regional engagement in fragile states.

1. Build capacity for gender analysis and advocacy in fragile states:

- Provide adequate time and resources for fieldwork during the design and implementation of programs in fragile states to ensure that gender analysis is conducted competently and comprehensively.
- Build and reinforce local capacities to promote gender equality and take effective action on issues of inequality. In fragile states this may include targeting women and women's organizations for support but it could also require engaging a range of local actors, including those that are not "approved" by governments.
- Strengthen the ability of women to participate in public affairs, and promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making about societal priorities.
- Help partners move beyond a focus on women as "victims" (of conflict, human rights abuses, economic marginalization, etc.) to also recognize and reinforce women's (and men's) unique contributions to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, democratization and economic development.

2. Promote GE in whole-of-government strategies for engagement in fragile states:

- Work to develop a common understanding of the gender dimensions of state fragility across all relevant government departments, including Foreign Affairs, National Defence, Justice, International Trade, etc.
- Encourage engagement and accountability for promoting GE in fragile states among senior officials. A recent report on Canadian, Dutch and British efforts to

implement UNSC 1325 found that “[s]upport, sustained leadership and political will are necessary in order to implement the resolution, and generally reside at ... senior level positions within government.”^{xi} The same holds true for integrating gender considerations in policy and programming in fragile states.

- Lead efforts to improve coordination among all actors engaged in promoting GE in fragile states – governmental and non-governmental, at the field and policy levels -- to ensure policy and programming coherence.

3. Integrate GE into multilateral and regional engagement in fragile states:

- Promote acceptance by DAC members and development partners of the gender dimensions of state fragility and the importance of promoting GE in fragile states, beginning with the proper integration of GE considerations into the draft Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States.
- Enhance cooperation among DAC members, and in other international bodies, to promote consistency in GE policy and programming in fragile states.
- Ensure that members of DAC and other multilateral organizations provide adequate and predictable resources designated to promoting GE in fragile states.
- Build into the LAP a mutual learning process on best practices for the promotion of GE in fragile states based on joint reflection and the sharing of experience among DAC Members and their development partners.
- Strengthen the competencies of regional mechanisms and institutions to promote GE in fragile environments, and to help prevent gender-based human rights violations -- including violations related to the movement of armed combatants across borders, the treatment of refugees, and human trafficking.
- Help build regional networks between stakeholders committed to gender equality in order to build capacity and stimulate mutual learning.

Conclusions: Bringing gender into policy and practice in fragile states

Women and men are affected differently by various aspects of state fragility, including armed conflict and efforts to resolve it, large-scale human rights abuses, and political, economic and social marginalization. Women and men can also play different roles in counteracting state failure.

CIDA is legally committed to promoting gender equality in all its development policy and programming. Indeed the 1999 Policy on Gender Equality states unequivocally that “Gender equality must be considered as an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs and projects.”^{xii} The Government of Canada has also made domestic commitments to gender equality as spelled out in The Federal Plan for Gender Equality. It has endorsed the UN’s 1995 Beijing Declaration, its Platform for Action and Security Council Resolution 1325 as well as the DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality.

CIDA’s gender equality policies and frameworks, and the insights and guidelines developed by the UN and the DAC provide helpful tools for integrating GE into policy development, programming and learning in fragile states. For instance:

- CIDA has identified gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in all its programming and has developed comprehensive approaches for conducting gender analyses throughout its policy and programming cycle.
- CIDA and other DAC members have acknowledged the importance of engaging stakeholders concerned with GE at key moments in the design, implementation and assessment stages of development programming in fragile states and building the capacity of agents and mechanisms of change at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- CIDA and other development partners have developed analytical frameworks that recognize and reinforce the unique contributions of women and men to counteracting state failure, preventing conflict and building sustainable peace.
- CIDA and others have also developed tools to integrate GE into sectoral interventions – from governance and human rights, through social development, to private sector development and other forms of economic development.
- CIDA has developed a framework to monitor the extent to which the Agency's key development results reflect its policy commitment to gender equality.

Despite GoC commitments to GE and the existence of helpful tools for integrating GE in fragile states, the fact that the diplomacy, development and commerce chapters of the IPS are largely silent on gender suggests that GE may not be adequately integrated into whole-of-government initiatives. CIDA can play a leadership role in encouraging other government departments to integrate GE concerns into whole-of-government approaches to state fragility. CIDA can help develop a common understanding of the gender dimensions of state fragility among relevant government departments and ensure that this and other GoC commitments to gender equality are integrated into all joint policy and programming in fragile states. This may be accomplished by bringing gender experts into the inter-departmental Stabilization and Reconstruction Taskforce (START) and strengthening senior officials' engagement and accountability on GE in fragile states.

CIDA and other government departments can assume more active roles in helping multilateral bodies like the DAC bring GE meaningfully into their work on fragile states. CIDA can start by working to develop a consensus among the DAC Fragile States Group, and other DAC members and development partners of the gender dimensions of state fragility and the importance of promoting GE in policy and programming in fragile states. Discussions surrounding the development and piloting of the DAC principles for engagement in fragile states provide a critical opportunity in this regard. The LAP meetings and the Haiti pilot process offer important opportunities for Canada to make a key contribution to building understanding and promoting action on GE in fragile states.

The work of The North-South Institute and others suggests that a number of challenges remain for integrating GE considerations into policy and programming on fragile states. A recent paper by NSI reveals that major donors fail to systematically incorporate gender equality considerations into their emerging strategies on fragile states, despite having developed impressive gender equality processes and frameworks in other domains.^{xiii} Where gender is addressed in these documents, the focus tends to be on women and girls

as victims of physical insecurity or on the promotion of basic education and health for women to help reduce infant and child mortality.

These major weaknesses may be products of the “good enough governance” or “realistic priorities” approach to engagement in fragile states advocated by DfID, some UN agencies and others. This approach prioritizes building a state’s capacity to deliver on basic obligations while avoiding socially and politically contentious issues that might compromise stabilization efforts. Yet this approach raises important questions about when and how issues of gender equality will be addressed by the stabilization agenda. The tendency to revert to “woman as victim” or “woman as mother” models of gender relations may also undermine the work to date of development and other actors to promote the human rights of women and girls, to secure their access to and control over resources and to support their role as decision-makers.

CIDA’s draft fragile states strategy may stand as a partial exception to these emerging trends. This strategy explicitly recognizes the differential impact of state fragility on men and women and reaffirms CIDA’s commitment to support women and women’s organizations as agents of change in fragile environments. However, CIDA’s strategy could address the gender dimensions of state fragility more systematically.^{xiv} For instance the strategy could incorporate stronger language on the promotion of gender equality as a cross-cutting priority for CIDA and other government departments. It could also better link Canada’s GE commitments through CEDAW and UNCRC to broader international human rights commitments. It could continue to acknowledge that men and women are differentially vulnerable to aspects of fragility but also focus more explicitly on the positive contributions women and women’s organizations can make to counteracting state failure.

To integrate gender considerations in their own work on fragile states and to move this agenda forward in other government departments and multilateral fora, CIDA, the International Development Research Centre and others could also support further research on gender equality and state fragility. Operational research could help Canada and other northern governments/agencies track their efforts to integrate GE into their programming in fragile states. Applied research could help southern stakeholders document their experiences with GE in their contexts. Deeper research could examine more fundamental issues – for example, how the whole discourse on state fragility might undermine GE and human rights more broadly, or whether the list of “crisis states” might look somewhat different if GE were a central concern among decision-makers in this field. Southern analysts would have much to contribute to such deeper research.

Canada and CIDA in particular have a long trajectory of innovation in the area of gender equality – as well as in the domains of governance, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The emergence of fragile states as a focus of whole-of-government efforts offers unique opportunities to build on these historic strengths and innovate once again – by making gender equality a central priority in our practices towards fragile states. By doing so Canada could make a unique contribution to the effectiveness of interventions in societies with fragile institutions – not least because men and women must be central to reversing fragility in an inclusive, equitable and sustainable manner.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Government of Canada, 2005.
- ⁱⁱ This definition reflects the current OECD Development Assistance definition of fragile states or “difficult partnerships”. See OECD DAC/DCD, April 2005.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See World Bank, 2002; OECD DAC/DCD, February 2005; UK Cabinet Office, February 2005; UNSG, March 2005.
- ^{iv} Baranyi and Powell, August 2005.
- ^v See OECD DAC, 1998, UN, 1995 and Government of Canada, 1995 for these multilateral and national commitments.
- ^{vi} CIDA, 1999.
- ^{vii} CIDA, 1999b.
- ^{viii} CIDA, 2003.
- ^{ix} Fund for Peace, 2005.
- ^x The Gender and Peacebuilding Framework suggests a series of results one might anticipate from GE-sensitive interventions, and offers indicators to assess outcomes. The latter include project-level indicators such as budgetary resources being provided to ensure that the GE elements are delivered at the implementation stage. They also include macro-level outcome indicators such as increased participation of women in peace-making and peacebuilding processes, or increased institutional capacity to respond effectively to women’s complaints about human rights violations.
- ^{xi} Uppsala Universitet and Collegium for Development Studies, 2005: page 34. The Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee’s Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group anticipated many of this study’s findings in CPCC, October 2004.
- ^{xii} CIDA, 1999.
- ^{xiii} Baranyi and Powell, op cit.
- ^{xiv} For a more detailed assessment of CIDA's draft strategic framework from a gender equality perspective see Baranyi and Powell, 2005a.

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