

Sent: Thursday, December 03, 2009 9:57 AM

TO: Conference Offices and
Pastoral Charges (with e-mail) in those respective Conferences

United Church Calls on CIDA to Reconsider Cuts to KAIROS

The United Church of Canada expresses its profound shock at the news of the Canadian government's decision to cut funding to KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

KAIROS, a church-based non-governmental organization, represents seven of Canada's largest denominations, including The United Church of Canada. It works with global partners on a range of social justice issues, including human rights in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

According to a media release issued by KAIROS on December 2, 2009, an official from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) called KAIROS executive director Mary Corkery on Monday afternoon, November 30, to inform her that CIDA would no longer fund KAIROS. Corkery was told that KAIROS no longer fits CIDA priorities. No other explanation or information was provided. KAIROS' current contract with CIDA expired in September, but it had received an extension until November 30, the day it was informed of the cuts.

For more than 35 years, KAIROS and its precursor organizations have been funded by CIDA. KAIROS says the decision to cut CIDA funding will have a devastating impact on KAIROS' overseas partners and the thousands of marginalized people in local communities that these partners support.

"We are deeply concerned about the significant impact this decision will have on partner organizations around the world whose invaluable work KAIROS supports," said Nora Sanders, The United Church of Canada's General Secretary of the General Council. "KAIROS has a long history of advancing justice and human rights around the world. We hope CIDA and the Government of Canada will reconsider."

KAIROS says this decision, if not reversed, would cut funds to 21 ecumenical and citizens' organizations in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and cut educational work that helps Canadians across the country to develop skills and knowledge in the exercise of their global citizenship.

United Church congregations are being invited to respond to KAIROS' call to action to have this decision reversed. Church members are encouraged to meet with their MPs to

- * speak about their own positive involvement with KAIROS
- * express grave concern about this decision
- * state KAIROS' desire to restore the long-standing relationship with CIDA
- * emphasize the impacts of this decision on global partners and KAIROS' work in Canada
- * ask them to call on the Government of Canada to reverse this decision

KAIROS supporters are also asked to write to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, pm@pm.gc.ca; Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, oda.b@parl.gc.ca; and Margaret Biggs, President of CIDA, Margaret.Biggs@acdi-cida.gc.ca, requesting a reversal of the decision. Please copy your letters to KAIROS at info@kairoscanada.org.

For more information about the CIDA cuts, please visit the KAIROS website, www.kairoscanada.org.

For more information, please contact:
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