



## I. ENVIRONMENT POLICY

### BACKGROUND

There is fundamental interdependence between the environment, human life, and global development. The unsustainable consumption patterns of recent decades have caused tremendous damage to the environment, at the cost of human lives, loss of livelihoods, and poverty.

ADRA Canada's Environment Policy is built upon the Christian principles of stewardship of resources and respect for our natural environment. We believe that we are called to be stewards of God's creation. As stewards, humans are not owners of the world's resources, since *"the earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it"* (Psalm 24:1). While working to relieve poverty, increase self-reliance, and encourage just social relationships, ADRA Canada also works as stewards of our planet and the environment.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church's development and relief agency, ADRA Canada is part of the global movement to eradicate poverty. In 2013, the United Nations emphasized the centrality of climate change in the global agenda to eliminate poverty. According to the UN, *"scientific evidence of the direct threat from climate change has mounted. The stresses of unsustainable production and consumption have become clear, in areas like deforestation, water scarcity, food waste, and high carbon emissions."*<sup>1</sup>

In certain cultures, there is increased recognition of the different ways in which men and women interact with and are impacted by the environment. Where they have distinct roles, priorities and needs, men and women can use natural resources differently, and environmental conditions can impact their lives in different ways. Some environmental issues are gendered as women and girls can be impacted more severely by food shortages in some cultures, and are at greater risk of gender-based violence in the aftermath of disasters.<sup>2</sup> With respect to environmental governance, women currently occupy only 30 per cent of ministerial roles in environment related sectors worldwide in 2017.<sup>3</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Framework acknowledges the importance of reducing inequality in attaining sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations (2013). *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development*, New York, USA.

<sup>2</sup> IUCN (n.d.) Disaster and gender fact statistics. Retrieved from [https://www.unisdr.org/files/48152\\_disasterandgenderstatistics.pdf](https://www.unisdr.org/files/48152_disasterandgenderstatistics.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> UN Environment, Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017) Women in politics 2017 map. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/>

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

ADRA Canada’s environment policy is to integrate environmental considerations into all decision-making processes, projects, and activities, promoting sustainable development through responsible stewardship and use of natural resources, and building the resilience of women, girls, men, and boys against the impacts of climate change.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Overall Objectives:**

The objective of this policy, which aligns with the principles of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), is to ensure that ADRA Canada-supported programming and internal operations do not create or contribute to unduly negative environmental impacts for women and men. This policy also encourages ADRA Canada-supported programming and operations to contribute to enhanced environmental sustainability.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. To ensure that the operations of ADRA Canada promote and adhere to principles of equitable and inclusive sustainable development, defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>4</sup>
2. To strengthen the capacity of ADRA Canada and partners to develop and implement effective sustainable international development programs that conserve resources, regenerate the environment, foster innovative climate change adaptation, minimize climate impacts and take relevant gender based impacts into account.
3. To support environmentally-friendly, effective and innovative international humanitarian assistance programs that take into consideration climate impacts.

## **II. ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY and PROCEDURES**

ADRA Canada’s **Environment Strategy** is composed of four components:

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<sup>4</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development

1. *Integration* of environment considerations into all aspects of development and humanitarian assistance, both international and national, with a renewed commitment to address climate change issues through ADRA Canada's programs.
2. *Capacity-building* on environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation for project participants, implementing partners, and ADRA Canada staff. Capacity-building includes knowledge sharing at the country, regional and global levels.
3. *Environmental assessment procedures* to ensure evaluation of potential negative and positive impacts of programs and activities on lives, livelihoods, and the environment.
4. *Environmental impact monitoring, evaluation, and reporting* to measure performance against the policy objectives to ADRA Canada's stakeholders and the general public.

ADRA Canada's **Environment Management Procedures include the following:**

**1. Conduct scale-appropriate, environmental assessment and monitoring throughout all stages of national and international programs, taking into account any impacts that may have differential impacts based on gender or other personal characteristics.**

- a. **Stakeholder analysis.** Analyse the concerns, interests and potential impacts of strategies, programs, and actions on all stakeholders (considering differential impacts based on personal characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, and disability). Projects will also be assessed against the environmental regulations and legislation of the implementing country; Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; and the SPHERE Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, and other internationally accepted guidelines, as appropriate.
- b. **Perform a rapid assessment, or a strategic environmental assessment.** Using standard rapid environmental assessment tools, determine if an initiative will have a major environmental impact. If so, perform a strategic environmental assessment. Where appropriate or required in the locale, environmental assessment methods should incorporate gender-specific analytical tools and use sex-disaggregated data collection methods.
- c. **Set development and environmental objectives.** Determine what ADRA Canada wants to achieve from its development programs and humanitarian assistance, and ensure that the environmental objective is clearly specified.
- d. **Develop an implementation plan addressing identified environmental issues from a gender perspective.** Aside from developing an overall project plan, specific

environmental plans will be integrated into projects and will be based on results of an environmental assessment. Project plans will contain an Environment section describing the results of the stakeholder analysis and anticipated positive and negative environmental impacts, capacity and risk identification and mitigation, among others. The plan should ensure that both women and men participate in, and benefit from any environment related capacity-building and training activities and have the opportunity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

## **2. Model and embed an environment-conscious culture and build capacity to promote environmental management.**

- a) **Ensure that all ADRA Canada staff, volunteers, Board Directors, and implementing partners are aware of this policy and understand how it relates to their roles and responsibilities.** Assess knowledge and skills gaps. Communicate the importance of environmentally-friendly actions and programs in the new development context. Where resources allow, train staff in Canada and implementing offices so that all are empowered with knowledge and skills to contribute positively to the environment.
- b) **Reduce pollution, emissions and waste.** Where possible, ensure that all measures are taken to reduce the project's footprint by reducing pollution, emissions and waste. Such measures include, but are not limited to:
  - ensuring vehicles and office equipment are fuel efficient, and minimizing energy consumption (e.g. turning lights off, using natural light when possible, encouraging seasonal clothing, etc.);
  - reducing waste, increasing recycling, and composting appropriately;
  - using reusable or biodegradable dishes and utensils (avoiding Styrofoam, non-biodegradable plastic, etc);
  - utilizing and promoting sustainable travel options (e.g. walking, cycling, carpooling, public transit, etc.), and minimising air travel by using teleconference technology and by combining several activities in each trip. Carbon emissions are reduced when flight legs are longer with fewer take-offs and landings. Staff are to consider selecting flights with fewer connections if they are no more than 10% costlier than a more economic option.

## **3. Institutionalize environmental management**

**a. Measure performance.** Set indicators to measure ADRA Canada's impact on environmental resources, environment impacts in development and humanitarian assistance contexts, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and office efficiencies. Indicators may be aligned with internationally agreed targets.

**b. Report on performance against plans.** ADRA Canada will prepare reports for its stakeholders, clearly describing how much and through what means ADRA Canada has achieved its environment management objectives.

**c. Review policies, programs, measures and tools.** ADRA Canada will evaluate its policies every two years to ensure that it is kept abreast with current and global developments. Programs will be redesigned and measures recalibrated, as needed. Tools will be revised, replaced, or developed, as appropriate.

### III. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

ADRA Canada's Executive Director will be responsible for administering and interpreting this Policy under the oversight of the ADRA Canada Board of Directors, which may include assigning one or more ADRA Canada staff as the environmental focal point(s). The ADRA Canada ADCOM will give directions and maintain procedures to implement this Policy as necessary.

Date due for review and revision (maximum five years):    November 2024