

Group of 78 Chair's Report for 2025: Stepping Up to Meet the Moment

- 1. Introduction:** It is an honour to serve as Chair of the Group of 78 and to provide this report of our work in 2025.
- 2. Overview:** The past year was characterized by global disruption and disorder and threats to Canadian sovereignty. Our work in 2025 relied on exceptional volunteer contributions, strong strategic analysis, and programmatic innovation and agility. Across all our pillars—peace, climate, and justice—we intensified our dialogue with the Government of Canada and expanded our educational activities into new policy areas. Our 2025 policy conference on redefining development around AI, financing and the SDGs drew a large audience and much praise. Our membership ticked upward modestly, and we made notable gains in fundraising. And we are committed to integrating Indigenous perspectives and addressing Reconciliation in our work going forward. The year ahead promises to be volatile and challenging for Canada and the world, but the Group of 78 is fully committed to stepping up to meet the moment.
- 3. Appreciation:** The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Board of Directors continues to serve as the driving force of the Group of 78. Members of the committee include Vice-Chair Susan Tanner (also Chair of the Environment and Climate Working Group), Past Chair Roy Culpeper (Chair of the Economic and Social Justice Working Group), Board Secretary and Former Chair Richard Harmston, Treasurer Genevieve Harrison, and Board Members Ruby Dagher (Chair of the Peace and Security Working Group), Leah Darbyson and Gordon Breedyk. All are outstanding volunteers with superior skills and knowledge and deep commitment, with Roy, Leah and Gord making special contributions in 2025. ExCom also expresses much appreciation for the hard work and dedication of G78's Executive Secretary, Maude Stephany.
- 4. Honours:** On behalf of our Board of Directors, Richard Harmston paid tribute to the lives of four friends of the Group of 78 who left us in 2025: Peter Meincke, Susan (Tudy) McLaine, John Stone, and John Meisel. All were outstanding Canadians who made valuable contributions to our work. They will be missed. At the same time, we celebrated along with many others when longstanding G78 member and former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament and Senator Doug Roche received the Canadian Leadership for Nuclear Disarmament 2025 Distinguished Achievement Award, an honour he so fully deserves.

5. Revitalization: With the appointment in 2025 of Genevieve Harrison and Leah Darbyson, the membership of ExCom reached gender balance. Ms. Darbyson, a NPSIA student, has brought to the committee a fresh perspective on foreign policy issues. While G78's general membership experienced only a modest increase this past year, and needs further work, there was a pronounced increase in visits to our website. Whereas in 2024 we logged about 7,900 views of our site and just over 3,100 visitors, in 2025 the G78 website attracted about 14,400 views and 8,700 visitors, nearly doubling and tripling, respectively, those key metrics. The buzz around the 2025 conference and an accelerated flow of our own website posts were likely factors in these increases.

We also made progress in raising money. Fundraising gains included in 2025 a more than doubling of monetary transactions and a 1.5X increase in private donations compared with 2024. Notable contributors in 2025 included Tim Brodhead, Gordon Breedyk, Roy Culpeper and Derek Paul. The first edition of our new matching campaign in November 2025, Giving Week, generated \$4,000. We also invited members and supporters to include the Group of 78 in their wills. Moreover, the International Development Research Centre contributed \$10,000 toward the 2025 conference and, for the first time, thanks to Mr. Brodhead, G78 received a grant from the Community Foundation of Ottawa.

6. Policy Dialogue: In 2025, G78 intensified its policy dialogue with Canada's federal government, conveying our positions on an array of issues. On **climate and environment**, we provided the Minister for Climate Change and Environment with the key messages and recommendations from our 2024 conference on the climate crisis; urged the government to slow its major projects bill, respect the rights of Indigenous communities, and reduce the power of big oil; signed the North Coast Protection Declaration to enforce the ban on oil tankers in coastal waters; and praised the International Court of Justice opinion that states are legally liable for damage caused to the environment and people.

On **peace and security**, we urged the Prime Minister to use Canada's G7 presidency to reject the 5% defence spending target, de-escalate the Ukraine-Russia conflict, and unblock food-aid convoys for Gaza; called for Canada to work with the UN General Assembly for the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force to enforce an Israel-Palestine ceasefire; and signed the petition supporting a private member's bill to close the loopholes on onward sales of Canadian weapons via the United States. We also endorsed important policy positions opposing nuclear weapons by our sister organization, the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. And we amplified the policy analysis and solutions of G78 Board members and friends on **other issues**, such as Bruce Campbell on the Lac-

Mégantic rail disaster, Michael Byers on the American attack on Venezuela, and Thomas Homer-Dixon on threats to Canadian sovereignty.

- 7. Educational Activities:** At the same time, the past year saw the Group of 78 broaden its educational activities in response to a volatile world economy and disrupted global governance and security. We organized **webinars** with Thomas Homer-Dixon on defending Canadian democracy, with Manfred Bienefeld on the geopolitics of the Ukraine-Russia war and, near the end of the year, with NGO policy experts on cuts to the Canadian aid program, particularly in health, co-sponsored with NPSIA at Carleton University. In addition, early in the year, with our partner, the G 20 Inter-Faith Forum or IF 20, animated by Ruby Dagher and Jim Christie, we co-sponsored a webinar on the nuclear threat in the Ukraine-Russia war. Later, moderated by Board member Jim Christie, we co-sponsored with IF 20 another webinar on the role of religion in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. With the University of Ottawa's Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS), G-78 co-sponsored a hybrid workshop assessing eight years of Canada's feminist international assistance policy. And Board Chair Ted Jackson gave a talk on G78's work entitled *We Are Not Bystanders* to the University of Victoria's Centre for Global Studies. Our most ambitious educational activity in 2025 was our annual **conference** held on October 10, 2025, led by Roy Culpeper, and on the theme of *Redefining Development in the New World Disorder: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Innovative Finance to Reach the Sustainable Development Goals*. Co-sponsored by IDRC and CIPS, the meeting attracted 160 participants in-person and online and featured two keynotes, three panels and 20 expert speakers and moderators from academia, think tanks, government and civil society. The quality of the presentations and discussion was widely praised. A team of eight student rapporteurs from Ottawa and Carleton universities worked with our Chief Rapporteur, Susanne Ure, to record the deliberations and produce a comprehensive conference report, which is being finalized. A range of follow-on action-research opportunities on AI, development finance, and the SDGs will be explored with partner universities, think tanks and NGOs in Canada and the Global South.
- 8. Indigenous Perspectives:** Inspired by Elder Verna McGregor and other Indigenous elders and leaders, G78 will take steps in 2026 to improve our knowledge of and engagement with Indigenous perspectives and Reconciliation. We recognize the damage perpetrated on this land and its original peoples by our colonial institutions. As a foreign-policy non-profit, G78 supports the implementation in Canada and globally of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Closer to home, we will explore with Elder McGregor a possible project in the Ottawa-Outaouais region that would combat the pollution of local water resources.

Water may also be the theme of the 2027 policy conference. The Executive Committee will assess these and other possible lines of action as we learn more and strive to integrate Indigenous dimensions into our work.

- 9. Looking Ahead:** Building on the momentum generated in 2025, G78 will construct an exciting agenda of dialogue and education in 2026. Later this month, we will host webinars on the health effects of fossil fuels and on seeds, biodiversity and food security; and a rich menu of other webinars is planned for the year ahead. Our 2026 fall conference will focus on peace and security and our 2027 conference on climate and environment. Figure 1 summarizes some of the key issues we are tracking and prioritizing across G78's three pillars of peace, climate and justice. We intend to explore new partnered activities with Ottawa, Carleton and Victoria universities, the non-profit Victoria Forum, CNANW, and IF 20. G78 is also interested in reinforcing plurilateral initiatives to promote good-quality jobs, transition away from fossil fuels, combat hunger, democratize AI, expand innovative finance tools, especially in the public sector, and renovate the SDGs and what follows them. And we will remain alert to threats to Canadian sovereignty from all quarters and in all forms.
- 10. International Meetings:** Among the international meetings we are tracking for 2026 are: in June, the G7 summit in France; in August, the BRICS leaders' summit in India; in September, the UN General Assembly in New York City; and in December, COP 31 in Turkey and the G20 summit in the United States. We are especially interested in policy dialogue and education in support of the plurilateral meeting planned for April 2026 in Colombia with The Netherlands on *the transition away from fossil fuels*.
- 11. Conclusion:** There is little doubt that 2026 will be consequential year for Canada and the world. We must continue to build the capacity of our organization to not only respond to evolving events in real time, but also to *anticipate* where the leverage, allies and possibilities will be to strengthen peace, fight climate change, and expand economic and social justice. That is why the Group of 78 exists—and that is exactly what we will do. We pledge to step up to meet this moment.

Ted Jackson

Chair, Group of 78

January 12, 2026

Figure 1: An Emerging Agenda

