



## Australia for UNHCR

February 2011

### **Australia for UNHCR Submission Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness**

#### **Executive Summary**

Australia for UNHCR is a registered charity in Australia whose purpose is to raise funds in the private sector for, and to promote public awareness of, the global humanitarian programmes and activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Australian private sector, including individual donors, foundations and business, is playing an increasingly important role in the funding of humanitarian and other forms of international aid and development.

According to ACFID in the period 2008-2009 the Australian public donated \$808.8m to aid and development work with 1.61 million Australians contributing to NGO's.

This reflects a significant engagement from individual Australians and the private sector in supporting international aid and development both financially and through increased awareness of the importance of engaging at a global level.

This sector trend reflects the experience of Australia for UNHCR which, although only established in 2000, now has over 31,000 donors contributing \$12m per year to UNHCR's international humanitarian programs. By 2015 we expect to be raising more than \$20m for such programs.

Currently AusAID's key areas of interaction with NGO's are through ACFID or with individual NGO's through the Australian NGO Co-operation Program and other smaller programs with accredited agencies. Accreditation is described by AusAID as the 'cornerstone' of AusAID's relationship with NGO's.

This means that for organisations like Australia for UNHCR who are not accredited and who do not receive government funding, there are limited opportunities to engage directly with ACFID.

The impact of this means that opportunities may be missed to recognise the contribution of our donors to international aid and development, and to encourage wider support for the government's aid and development agenda.

Opportunities may also be missed to leverage off existing partnerships and maximise the impact of Australian private sector and government sponsored initiatives for aid delivery.

We submit that AusAID's structures and consultative mechanisms be reviewed to provide for wider consultation, co-operation and engagement with Australian private sector donors through NGO's and other organisations not accredited to AusAID.

By broadening the Australian government's level of engagement with civil society in Australia we submit that public support will be increased for the government's aid objectives and Australia will maximise aid and development outcomes.

## **1. About Australia for UNHCR**

1.1 Australia for UNHCR is a registered charity in Australia whose purpose is to raise funds in the private sector for, and to promote public awareness of, the global humanitarian programmes and activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

1.2 Established in 2000, Australia for UNHCR's mission is to make a life-changing difference to the lives of refugees and displaced people around the world.

1.3 Australia for UNHCR raises private sector funds and public awareness for UNHCR's humanitarian programs for refugees.

1.4 A copy of the full Corporate Statement is attached to this submission (Attachment 1).

1.5 Australia for UNHCR has Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Status through its listing as a specific international affairs recipient under Section 30.80 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

1.6 Australia for UNHCR is affiliated to the Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA) which sets standards for the charitable and fundraising sector.

1.7 It is a full member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and also a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct.

1.8 Australia for UNHCR is one of a number of fundraising organisations around the world set up by UNHCR to support its private sector fundraising.

1.9 As such, Australia for UNHCR does not currently receive funding from the Australian government and is not an accredited NGO.

1.10 Australia for UNHCR operates through a formal funding and licencing agreement with UNHCR which authorises Australia for UNHCR to undertake private sector fundraising for UNHCR's behalf in Australia in support of UNHCR's international humanitarian projects.

1.11 Australia for UNHCR works closely with UNHCR in Geneva HQ, in the field and with the UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra.

## **2. About UNHCR**

2.1 UNHCR estimates that there are currently 42 million people who have been forced to flee from their homes by conflict and persecution. More than 80% of displaced people are women and children.

2.2 UNHCR is a frontline organisation engaged in some of the most complex emergencies and refugee situations today. Its core role is to ensure that the legal rights of displaced are respected and upheld. As an operational agency it also provides humanitarian support such as shelter, food, water, sanitation, medical care and education.

2.3 UNHCR receives only 2% of funding from the UN and must raise the additional 98% of its budget from voluntary contributions from government, corporates, foundations and individual donors.

2.4 UNHCR's Global Report each year is one of the key reporting tools for donors on how their funds are expended, providing detailed information on the work of UNHCR by region and country.

2.5 UNHCR's recent reforms have included a shift to Results-Based Management and a Global Needs Assessment. Under the results-based management framework all of UNHCR's operations each year set measurable targets they are trying to achieve across operations so that we can measure effectiveness for beneficiaries and donors and feed results back into each year's planning cycle.

## **3. Australia for UNHCR - Activities and Achievements**

3.1 In 2009 the private sector globally contributed more than \$A70m to UNHCR's humanitarian operations, the majority of which comes from the five private sector organisations and operations established by UNHCR in Australia, Spain, Japan, USA and Germany.

3.2 Since 2000 Australia for UNHCR has raised more than \$A38m for UNHCR's operations.

3.3 Australia for UNHCR is now the third largest private sector donor to UNHCR globally.

3.4 The majority of these funds have been raised from individual Australian donors.

3.5 Australia for UNHCR also has in place a number of corporate partnerships, the most significant being with PWC which has contributed more than \$4.4m globally towards UNHCR's education programs in Chad.

3.6 The PWC contribution marks the biggest corporate gift in Australia and to UNHCR globally (see case study below).

3.7 In addition to financial support, Australia for UNHCR estimates promotional program reaches more than 200,000 Australians each year.

#### **4. Making a Difference**

4.1 Australia for UNHCR has committed to transferring up to 80% of its funds to UNHCR to be used for unearmarked emergency operations.

4.2 Further details of countries and sectors funded are included in Australia for UNHCR's annual report available at [www.unrefugees.org.au](http://www.unrefugees.org.au)

4.3 In 2011 this will represent approximately \$7.62m of funds transferred to UNHCR.

4.4 In addition Australia for UNHCR directs about 20% of its funds to earmarked projects agreed with UNHCR.

4.5 In 2011 this represents approximately \$1.9m of funds transferred.

4.6 These projects are identified according to three main criteria:

- Projects must be tangible
- Projects must be measurable
- Projects would not otherwise be funded without Australian support

4.7 Key examples of projects funded by Australia for UNHCR include:

- Reproductive health projects in Chad, Myanmar and Somalia- the latter of which is the only reproductive health program operated by UNHCR in Somalia
- Construction of the first ever secondary school in Nakivale refugee settlement in south west Uganda
- Provision of more permanent shelters for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh – helping to resolve the protracted situation of this minority group living in extreme poverty
- Commitment to the South Sudanese repatriation and rebuilding program over the past five years as the country starts to rebuild after 23 years of civil war
- \$1m raised for the Pakistan flood crisis in August 2010 – more funds were raised from our donors for this crisis than any other emergency

4.8 While much of our support can be characterised as humanitarian aid, increasingly because of the protracted nature of refugee situations we are also supporting the delivery of aid with longer term outcomes.

4.9 For example, in Nakivale refugee settlement, which has been in existence for more than 50 years, we are funding the implementation of education, water, health and environmental programs that are aimed at providing longer term sustainable

support for refugees living in the settlement and also support to the host Ugandan community that share resources with the refugees.

4.10 Australia for UNHCR undertakes regular field visits to enable us to monitor progress and outcomes of funded projects and in consultation with UNHCR and refugee groups within the camps, to develop and identify new projects for Australian donor support.

## **5. Australian Donors**

5.1 Australia for UNHCR currently has approximately 31,000 financial supporters, the majority of who give via regular gifts.

5.2 Australia for UNHCR provides regular updates and communications with our donors via newsletters, annual reports and online alerts and briefings as well as our website.

5.3 In addition we survey our donors on a regular basis to identify areas of interest and support.

## **6. Public Awareness**

6.1 Australia for UNHCR undertakes regular public awareness activities to promote greater support for UNHCR and to encourage greater understanding about the plight of refugees worldwide.

6.2 We work with a number of high profile Australians such as Jane Turner (well known to Australians as part of the Kath & Kim TV series), Australian Soccerroo Mark Schwarzer and cricket legend Ian Chappell. All of our representatives have undertaken field visits to see first-hand the situation of refugees and to promote great public awareness through the media.

6.3 Australia for UNHCR also undertakes regular media missions to the field, for example in December 2009 we sponsored a Channel 9 news and current affairs team to spend three days in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya profiling the projects funded by Australian private sector donors.

## **7. Australia for UNHCR and AusAID**

7.1 Despite having over 31,000 donors, raising more than \$38 million over the past 10 years and undertaking substantial public awareness activity around the issue of humanitarian support to UNHCR, Australia for UNHCR has not had any substantive contact with AusAID about our activities including the now substantive aid projects we are funding.

7.2 This may in part reflect the fact that Australia for UNHCR (as distinct from UNHCR) does not receive government funding and there are therefore limited institutional links between the organisations.

7.3 This in our view means that there are a number of missed opportunities to promote possible shared or, at least, complementary objectives to ensure that funding sourced from the private sector is consistent and coherent with that provided by government sources.

7.4 For example, the Australian government has part-funded shelter projects in refugee camps in Bangladesh. UNHCR has sought ongoing support from Australia for UNHCR to help ongoing funding of this project. The potential outcome is a very significant contribution from both Australian private sector donors and the Australian government to a key UNHCR project. However to date there has been no meeting between Australia for UNHCR or relevant Australian government officials to maximise the impact of Australian private sector support and government support.

7.5 Another example of the 'disconnect' between private sector support through Australian for UNHCR and Government support is in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. The National Director of Australia for UNHCR during a visit to Dadaab refugee camp in December 2009 committed \$600,000 towards various projects in the camp. During her visit she learnt coincidentally that the then Parliamentary Secretary for Aid and Development, The Hon Bob McMullen MP, was visiting the camp two days later to review Australian government support to UNHCR operations in Dadaab. This was, in our view, a missed opportunity to maximise the combined impact of the Australian private sector and government donor support to Dadaab.

7.6 Australia for UNHCR has since been more proactive in providing updates about its programs to AusAID by providing AusAID country representatives with information about relevant programs we are funding in their regions as well as updating AusAID in Canberra and we will continue to do so. However under current AusAID arrangements the prospects for greater collaboration and leverage appear limited.

## **8. Corporate Opportunities**

8.1 The majority of private sector support comes from individual donors, however a growing number of corporate supporters are also providing support to Australia for UNHCR particularly as Emergency Partners committing to providing funding when natural or man-made emergencies arise.

8.2 Key corporate supporters include Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC), Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Colonial First State GAM, Australian Institute of Trustees (AIST) and ARUP Pty Ltd.

8.3 While we do not envisage a significant increase in support from this area it is important to note the impact that the corporate sector can make to the aid and development agenda as highlighted by the following example of PWC.

*To celebrate their 10 year anniversary, in 2009 PWC raised more than \$US4.4m for UNHCR to provide school infrastructure and other resources over three years for more than 300,000 refugee children currently in four refugee camps in eastern Chad. The children have now completed their first year. This project - 'Educating the Children of Darfur' - further developed on a global scale. It remains the largest single corporate donation received by UNHCR and is tangible proof of the impact that can be achieved through public and private sector partnership, even in the most remote and difficult locations.*

8.4 We are not aware of any AusAID strategy to engage the corporate sector in achieving its' aid and development objectives.

## **9. Other Issues**

### **9.1 Geographical Scope**

We do not intend to make any specific comment on the scope of the government aid program or UNHCR operations except to provide feedback that, when surveyed Australia for UNHCR donors have indicated that they consistently prioritised Africa as a key area they wish to support.

### **9.2 Sector Scope**

Again we do not have any specific comment to make except to provide feedback that when surveyed with Australia for UNHCR donors have highlighted prioritised areas of basic health and medical care, food and nutrition and education program as key sectors they wish to support.

## **Summary**

We submit that AusAID's structures and consultative mechanisms be reviewed to provide for wider consultation, co-operation and engagement with Australian private sector donors through NGO's and other organisations not accredited to AusAID.

By broadening the Australian government's level of engagement with civil society in Australia we submit that public support will be increased for the government's aid objectives and Australia will maximise aid and development outcomes.

### **For further information:**

Ms Naomi Steer, National Director



## Australia for UNHCR

### Corporate Statement

**Australia for UNHCR** is an Australian company limited by guarantee. It was registered under the Corporation Act on 4 July 2000. UNHCR is the single member of the company.

A registered charity, *Australia for UNHCR* has tax deductible Gift Recipient Status through its listing as a specific international affairs recipient under Section 30.80 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. It is endorsed by the ATO as an Income Tax Exempt Charity.

**Australia for UNHCR** is affiliated to the Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA), which sets standards for the charitable and fundraising sector. It is a signatory to the Code of Conduct of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), which ensures that NGOs conduct their activities with integrity, transparency and accountability. This code sets out an agreed set of values and principles for NGOs to follow in the work they support overseas and in their fundraising and educational activities.

**Australia for UNHCR** is one of a number of fundraising organisations around the world set up by UNHCR to support its private sector fundraising program. We operate through a formal funding and licensing agreement with UNHCR which authorises *Australia for UNHCR* to raise funds on its behalf in Australia to support UNHCR's international humanitarian projects. *Australia for UNHCR* works closely with the Public Sector Fund Raising Section (PSFR) in UNHCR Geneva and the UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra.