

## **Submission to the Panel of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit to this very important question of how Australian development aid program might be best implemented.

First principles for me are to ensure that

- AusAID is dispersed so that the vulnerable poor of the target country are the beneficiaries,
- gender equality is recognised,
- development initiatives are sustaining to the communities in which they are set, and sustainable in the long run in terms of human and environmental resources,
- economic independence of recipients is the final outcome.

Australia is a rich and privileged country, and it should be our role to share our wealth with those less fortunate – and to do this in a way that builds (and never undermines) local long term economic and social strength and stability.

To ensure that these principles “work” in practice, none of the aid that we give should be tied to benefitting Australian businesses at the expense of enhancing economic development and social justice/equity in the target country. While Australian aid in the past has been subjected to “serving our national interest” to varying degrees, I think the reference to “national interest” as an “objective” in our aid program should now be removed.

I call upon the Australian also to create a separate Department for AusAID (rather than having it under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.) With a separate Cabinet Minister responsible for international development, the “first principle” would have a greater chance of implementation.

The impact of global climate change on the poor is disproportionate, and must be addressed via AusAID. “Climate change refugees” will be mostly poor people. Some Pacific islanders managed to make this point rather well in the lead-up to Copenhagen last year. Oxfam has also exposed this outcome of climate change, rising sea levels, increase in extreme weather, food security issues – and I would hope that AusAID responds in a positive way with the poor as its focus, to do what we can to ensure that development prospects are most enhanced by our interventions.

I call on the Australian Government to commit to spending at least \$2.1 billion per year for climate aid, commensurate with Australia’s contribution to global overseas development aid.

These funds must be NEW money – that is, not diverted from other development priorities.

To ensure that AusAID spending is transparent and accountable, it should be monitored by a NEW and INDEPENDENT Office of Development Effectiveness – that is, separate from AusAID. This information should be published and freely

available to all interested Australian citizens. All commercial aid contracts should be subjected to close scrutiny and be compatible with the “Confidentiality Test” of the Department of Finance and Administration.

Aid recipients should be the identifiers of what technical aid is best suited to their needs. Local advisers should be given priority over external advisers. Local products and services should be used whenever possible to support local industries.

All aid providers should be required to demonstrate how their planning, activities and evaluation are guided by host governments, local communities and local civil society organisations.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Blyth

Date submitted: 26 January 2011