

To the panel of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness,

I wish to support the positions made in the submission to this review by Aid/Watch and I make the following recommendations:

Objective

- The objective of the review should be to make recommendations aimed at developing an aid program that demonstratively promotes poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development. This may involve making recommendations relevant to other areas of Australian policy development, including trade, investment, finance, migration, security and climate change.

Scope

With regards to the scope of this review as set out in the Terms of Reference, I request that the following issues be considered:

The performance of the aid program and lessons learned from Australia's approach to aid effectiveness

- When reviewing the effectiveness of the aid program, the emphasis on "Australia's national interests" in the aid programme and how this impacts on aid effectiveness and aligns with current international thinking on aid should be considered. In particular, the review should consider recommending that the reference to national interest be removed from the objective of Australia's aid program.
- The review of aid effectiveness should consider how aid programs will be impacted by climate change and how spending on programs to abate impacts from climate change is accounted for. In particular, the review should recommend that climate aid is new money, not funds redirected from other development priorities and that it is aimed primarily at assisting the most vulnerable communities and Australia should commit to at least A\$2.1 billion per year funding for climate aid, commensurate with Australia's contribution to global ODA.
- The review of aid effectiveness should consider reducing the proportion of aid money spent on Technical Assistance (TA) to at least the OECD average. Identification of TA needs should be led by aid recipients and use of local advisers prioritised over external advisers.
- The review of aid effectiveness should consider requiring all aid providers to demonstrate how their initiatives are guided by host governments, communities and civil society organisations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of aid initiatives.
- The review of aid effectiveness should consider the benefits of establishing AusAID as a separate department should be considered as a method of improving aid effectiveness, reducing risk, increasing transparency and increasing accountability.

The appropriateness of current arrangements for review and evaluation of the aid program, including an examination of the role of the Office of Development Effectiveness and options to strengthen the evaluation of the aid program

- When reviewing the appropriateness of the current arrangements for aid, the review should consider recommending that Australia follow the example of the UK's Independent Commission on Aid Impact and make the Office of Development Effectiveness an independent body.

The appropriateness of current arrangements for the management of fraud and risk in the aid program.

- It is essential for the management of fraud and risk that the aid program is transparent and accountable - in particular, it is essential that detailed information on all aid initiatives are made publicly available, including all part of commercial aid contracts that do not satisfy the Department of Finance and Administration's 'Confidentiality Test'. Where possible, the signing of contracts that mean information on aid projects and spending is not able to be made publicly available should be avoided.

Approach

- An extensive public consultation program should be included in the review and should not be limited to the Australian community. It should include consultation with NGOs in other countries and community members, particularly people in countries that are recipients of Australian aid or would benefit from Australian aid money. Communities that will be directly affected by Australian aid programs should be given a direct voice and opportunity to participate and input into this process.

Yours Sincerely,

Ashleigh Jane Jones