

# MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Australians calling on our Government to do our *fair share*  
to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and halve global poverty by 2015.

## Submission to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, January 2011

First things first: Make Poverty History (MPH) recognises that globally there have been very significant improvements in human welfare in recent years and the Millennium Development Goals have played a critical role in helping to motivate people and focus global development efforts. While not all the Goals are being achieved in all countries, overall there has been remarkable progress with millions more children in school, a dramatic and increasing rate of decline in child and maternal mortality, a turnaround in the growth of the major infectious diseases and huge increases in access to clean water and hygiene knowledge. Advances in technology, economic growth and improvements in development are all playing a part. There are still lots of problems, new threats to human welfare on the horizon and still lots of aid inefficiencies, however there is also much to be proud of.

Make Poverty History believes that the Government and AusAID also have much of which to be proud. The Government's commitment to increase aid to at least 0.5% of GNI, to meet our fair share of development funding for climate change and to play a leading role in international fora to promote issues such as education, health and financial stability in developing countries should all be commended. AusAID's increased focus on key MDG sectors and increased support for basic education, food security and health, its greater openness and consultation with civil society, improved evaluation, increased support for and cooperation with other bilateral and multilateral donors and focus on meeting Paris and Accra principles are all important improvements that we have observed in recent years.

In a way our submission could simply be: more of the same please, you are heading in the right direction. But to be a little more specific MPH would like to highlight the following actions which it believes are critical to further improving the aid program.

1. Set a timetable to lift aid to the international target of 0.7% of GNI as soon as possible – act as model to encourage all donors to meet their promise of 0.7%. This is especially important at this time of budget pressures for many donor nations.
2. Provide our fair share (ie around 2.5% of the costs, in line with our share of OECD DAC GNI) of the donor funding required to achieve the MDGs. This will require approximately A\$800 m a year for agriculture and food security, A\$450 m a year for basic education, A\$1200 m a year for health, \$600m for water and sanitation and our share of the agreed amount for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Progress on important commitments such as basic education for all, a 2/3rds reduction in child deaths, universal prevention and treatment of HIV are all falling short largely because of a shortage of funds – these are things the world knows how to achieve. Contribution of Australia's fair share in these sectors will have a direct benefit of critical additional funding which will make a big difference in life and death terms. It will also have and the indirect benefit of encouraging others – both donors and developing countries - to meet their commitments also. We cannot expect that other developed and developing nations will do the right thing if we don't. We cannot expect improved governance in developing countries if we do not show it ourselves

3. Increase funding to those countries in our region with the greatest number of people in poverty and increase efficient global support by increasing funding to effective multilateral programs.

4. Increase the transparency of the aid program – make the database of currently funded activities publicly available, meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative standards and shorten the time between evaluation and reporting.
5. Ensure civil society engagement by relevant groups in Australia, in each country and in the communities affected in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the aid program. This will be one of the hardest things to achieve, however the government and AusAID have the full support, the expertise and the networks of Australian development NGOs to help achieve this.
6. Work to ensure women have near equal representation in all planning, implementation and review activities from the community level to the most senior management of AusAID. Equal gender representation will make it much more likely that programs will meet the real needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and should act to ensure a better balance between support for practical basic services and for the theoretical goal of economic growth.
7. Protect the aid budget from the additional costs of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Follow the UK policy that no more than one tenth of the aid budget be spent on specific climate change activities to ensure that the vast bulk of climate change expenditure is truly additional to existing aid commitments.
8. Make greater use of Australia's influence to promote effective joint action on a range of key development concerns such as climate change agreements, gender equality and the reduction of violence against women, a pro-poor conclusion to the Doha round of trade discussions, more inclusive international business investment, innovative development finance, measures to effectively stem the US\$160 billion in illicit financial flows from developing countries, ,fairer international intellectual policy frameworks, more just international financial rules, aid commitments and coordination and adequate funding of joint initiatives and multilaterals. Australia should also take a leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure that aid from all donors is effectively targeted, coordinated and sufficient.
9. Increase the focus on equity. Ensure Australia's aid projects focus on the poorest and marginalised groups, support grass roots governance activities such as budget monitoring and community level corruption control, and increase support for Australian and local NGOs working with the poorest.
10. Double efforts in line with the Paris and Accra agreements on aid effectiveness to make aid more long term and predictable, harmonised around country systems and needs, coordinated with all other major donors in each country and accountable to beneficiaries.
11. Increase resources on the ground – learn from the weaknesses in PNG and some other country programs where too much money has gone to overpaid and often ineffective Western consultants and not increased the resources for services that people need. Use country systems, increase general budget support and sector wide programs, put downward pressure on contract prices and actively support the development of within-country expertise.
12. Build parliamentary understanding and support of development issues – take MPs 'to the field' by producing an easily digestible and graphic annual publication that share with them the stories of Australia's development efforts, stories they will remember and can share with their constituents.

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***Make Poverty History is part of the international campaign to halve global poverty, working in partnership with Micah Challenge and the Global Call For Action Against Poverty.***