



To the panel of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness,

The People's Health Movement Australia (PHM Oz)¹ calls upon the Australian Government to implement the following changes to Australia's aid program:

1. Ensure that Australia contributes to negotiating a world economy which supports the development (real development) of all countries, rich and poor, and helps us to move towards a sustainable and convivial global regime.

Note the reference to the 'development' of resource-rich as well as resource-poor countries. This implies moving away from conceiving 'development' of any country purely in terms of GDP. Australia has many 'development' challenges, most importantly moving to a low carbon economy, but also including: reversing the trend to growing inequity; addressing the exclusion of certain groups from full participation in the economy and looking towards decent work for all.

Note also the emphasis on the ways in which the way the global economy, especially trade and finance, shape the development prospects of resource-poor countries. Development 'assistance' is more than giving aid and technical advice. It should also aim to create an environment where the capabilities of individuals are built so they gain social, cultural and economic power

These are not objectives that AusAID by itself can deliver. However, it could support a national and international dialogue about the issues involved, the goals we should be aiming for and the strategies for achieving these goals.

2. Build a stronger understanding within the Australian polity of the obstacles to economic and social development in resource-poor countries and a greater sense of solidarity between Australians and the peoples of other countries.

This used to be called 'development education'. AusAID could provide more support to initiatives directed at such understanding and the development of such solidarity.

3. Increase overall aid spending to at least 0.7% of GNP.

At a minimum, the Australian Government should commit to meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNP spent on development assistance.

¹ The People's Health Movement is a global network of health activists and health organisations concerned with growing inequities in health and committed to promoting Health for all, equity and sustainable development.

4. Prioritise both health system strengthening and action to address the social determinants of health.

Action on the social determinants of health. The aid given by the Australian government should be informed by the findings of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (2008) which calls on governments to:

1. Improve daily living conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age especially for those living in rural areas.
2. Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources - the structural drivers of daily living conditions - globally, nationally and locally.

Details of how these recommendations can be enacted are provided in the WHO Report.

Health systems strengthening has been treated too much as a technical issue, where it is actually a profoundly political issue. AusAID should support:

- (i) a stronger role for civil society in participating in policy dialogue around health systems strengthening in accordance with the World Health Organization's Executive Board Resolution [EB128/R12](#) (Strengthening national policy dialogue to build more robust health policies, strategies and plans);
- (ii) programs which contribute to wider understanding in civil society of how their health systems are functioning; and what are the barriers to more accessible, better quality and more effective and efficient services; and
- (iii) programs which build capacity within ministries of health regarding the global factors which shape health and health care as well as resources for better policy making and implementation.

5. Implement the following changes:

(i) End the practice of using aid to further Australia's national interests:

- Remove reference to national interest from the objective of Australia's aid program
- Establish AusAID as a separate department (currently under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) with a Cabinet level minister responsible for international development.

(ii) Recognise that the impacts of climate change will drastically undermine development prospects for low-income countries:

- Commit to at least A\$2.1 billion per year funding for climate aid, commensurate with Australia's contribution to global ODA.
- Ensure that this climate aid is new money, not funds redirected from other development priorities and that it is aimed primarily at assisting the most vulnerable communities.

(iii) Improve the transparency, accountability and monitoring of Australian aid spending:

- Make the Office of Development Effectiveness an independent body separate from AusAID, following the example of the UK's Independent Commission on Aid Impact.
- Publish timely, accessible and detailed information about all aid initiatives.
- Publicly release all parts of commercial aid contracts which do not satisfy the Department of Finance and Administration's 'Confidentiality Test'.

(iv) Reduce 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 advisors prioritised over external advisors.

(v) Require 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.

(vi) Ensure that Australia's policies on trade, investment, finance, migration, security and climate change are consistent with the promotion of poverty alleviation, gender equity and sustainable development, and do not impact negatively on the health of populations in poor countries.

Yours sincerely,

Fran Baum
Co-convenor, People's Health Movement Australia
Co-Chair, Global Steering Committee, People's Health Movement

David Legge
Co-convenor, People's Health Movement Australia
Member, Global Steering Committee, People's Health Movement

Deborah Gleeson
Co-convenor, People's Health Movement Australia