



2 February 2011

Mr Sandy Hollway
Chair
Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness Secretariat
GPO Box 887
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: submissions@aidreview.gov.au

Dear Mr Hollway,

Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness.

Save the Children Australia (SCA) is a member of Save the Children International, the world's largest independent child rights development organisation, working in more than 120 countries towards a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

SCA operates program offices and directly manages ongoing community development programs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Timor Leste. We also support Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar. SCA maintains a significant emergency response capability - in 2010 we responded to humanitarian disasters in Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Haiti, Samoa, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

In 2009/10, SCA had total revenues of ~ \$A59.2 million of which AusAID grants accounted for ~\$10.8 million.

General comments

SCA believes that Australia can be proud of its efforts in the fight against poverty, particularly in our region, and commends the Government's intent to increase our Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI). However, the current Review should acknowledge that even at that level, Australia lags behind global best practice and should be working to meet the agreed UN target of an ODA program equivalent to around 0.7% of GNI.

Recommendation

SCA urges this Review to ensure that its outcomes and recommendations will assist in setting a path for administrative oversight and absorptive capacity which would seamlessly allow for a further increase to 0.7%, post achieving 0.5% in 2015/16.

Geographic Focus

SCA welcomes the clear focus of the Australian Government on working towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Asia-Pacific region and supports the targeting

of the aid program to areas where Australian NGOs and the Australian Government have comparative advantage and demonstrated quality programs.

Recommendation

SCA recommends a continued geographic focus targeting the fulfilment of the MDGs in South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific where, in some countries, child mortality and maternal death and HIV rates remain unacceptably high.

Sectoral Focus

SCA supports the Australian aid program narrowing its focus to the fulfillment of particular MDGs, such as MDG 4.

Recommendation

SCA urges the percentage of the aid budget's allocation to maternal, newborn & child health (MNCH) programs be increased, equating to at least a spend of \$520 million per year.

Further, SCA believes that as a major donor to the Pacific, Australia should adopt a leadership role in articulating a vision for assisting Pacific Nations to achieve MDG 4 (reduce child mortality by 2/3) by 2015.

Recommendation

SCA recommends support is provided to each Pacific government to articulate a plan for the achievement of MDG 4.

Recommendation

SCA recommends support is provided to each Pacific government to increase the percentage of the budget allocation to MNCH programs, in each country.

The achievement of MDG 4 is deeply linked with the realisation of MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women. The 2007 and 2009 annual reviews of Australian aid published by the Office of Development Effectiveness have recommended planning and programming for gender equality shifts from peripheral to core goals of programs in order to have sustained outcomes for women and girls.

Recommendation

SCA urges that gender equality and equity is explicitly and systematically incorporated in all aspects of the aid program and that there is consistency in guidelines and tools for poverty analysis and programming, to ensure the link between gender equality and wider poverty goals is clear and programming is based on gender-sensitive poverty analysis.

SCA commends AusAID's commitment to support and promote basic service provision including education and health. Prioritising these services in economic and development planning is a positive step and central to achieving and sustaining development outcomes. SCA is concerned however that child protection is not being considered with the same weight. Evidence suggests that the strengthening of child protection policies, legislation and systems is critical to the achievement of social and economic development.ⁱ

Recommendation

SCA recommends that child protection should also be considered as a prioritised area of service provision for achieving and sustaining development outcomes.

Humanitarian & Emergency Response

SCA commends the Australian Government for its prompt commitment of funds to recent emergencies, in particular the recent Pakistan Flood response, where the timeliness of the funds saved many lives.

NGO's have advocated for donors and UN agencies to adopt appropriate mechanisms to improve the timeliness and predictability of funding to NGO's linked to the humanitarian reform and good humanitarian donorship initiatives. Despite this, NGO's continue to face significant delays in accessing funds which have been directed to the United Nations Emergency Response Fund (ERF).

Recommendation

SCA requests that the Government work with the UN to ensure the timely release of adequate funds for future emergencies and where pooled funding mechanisms are not working effectively; AusAID should consider increasing funding to NGOs to respond to priority needs and gaps.

Recommendation

SCA recommends that AusAID look to standardise and increase its current funding to complex and protracted emergencies to improve consistency and predictability.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

SCA recognises the quality of AusAID's engagement in DRR work as a means to ensure aid effectiveness. We have seen that DRR engagement with regional and multilateral institutions has been constructive and feel that the recent progress report of the AusAID DRR policy framework was timely.

Recommendation

SCA endorses the recommendations of the progress report, in particular the recommendation for the need for much greater financial and human investment. Furthermore we strongly encourage AusAID to increase engagement with NGOs undertaking DRR work.

Recommendation

SCA urges that the aid program integrates DRR in all program planning and commits to longer term dedicated funding mechanisms to protect Australia's aid investment and sustain development gains.

Focus on low and middle income countries

Although OECD donors committed to scaling up aid to low-income countries to meet the MDGs, over 60% of OECD country aid programs between 2005-2008 have generally favoured middle-income countries.ⁱⁱ SCA believes that aid programming should ultimately be based according to where the greatest need lies.

Recommendation

SCA recommends most of the aid program is directed at low-income countries and that programming should also be directed at the large numbers of very poor people in middle income countries.

Distribution channels of aid

AusAID's 2009-10 annual report acknowledges the success of NGOs in delivering consistently effective development programs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recommendation

SCA recommends the aid program draws on the strengths of NGOs in delivering aid programs by increasing the proportion of the aid budget dispersed via NGOs from 7% to 10%.

The aid program's approach to efficiency and effectiveness

SCA appreciates the work of the Office for Development Effectiveness' and its annual Review of Development Effectiveness. SCA encourages further strengthening of the aid program's efficiency and effectiveness in key priority areas. These key areas are, in part, in accordance with meeting obligations for effective aid delivery under the Accra Agenda for Action.

Recommendation

SCA urges that all Australian Government policies and programs are shaped according to human rights principles.

Recommendation

SCA recommends the aid program makes increased use of the expertise and skills of Australian and developing country NGOs to implement programs and reduce reliance on the use of consultants for technical assistance

Recommendation

SCA requests whole-government policy coherence around development objectives particularly concerning climate change and the movement of people: trafficked persons, asylum seekers and refugees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this review. For further information please contact Anna Schulze at anna.schulze@savethechildren.org.au

Yours sincerely,

[SIGNED]

Anna Schulze
Director of Policy, Research and Advocacy

ⁱ High-Level Meeting on Cooperation for Child Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region Beijing (2010) Child Protection And Child Welfare In Asia And The Pacific .

ⁱⁱ Centre for Development Policy and Research (2010) *A Post-2015 Development Agenda: What role for ODA?*, <http://www.soas.ac.uk/cdpr/publications/dv/file60796.pdf>

^{iv} AusAID (2010) 'ODA—Non-government organisations, volunteer and community programs' in *Annual Report 2009-10*, http://www.ausaid.gov.au/anrep/rep10/program1_7ngo.html

ⁱⁱ Centre for Development Policy and Research (2010) *A Post-2015 Development Agenda: What role for ODA?*, <http://www.soas.ac.uk/cdpr/publications/dv/file60796.pdf>

^{iv} AusAID (2010) 'ODA—Non-government organisations, volunteer and community programs' in *Annual Report 2009-10*, http://www.ausaid.gov.au/anrep/rep10/program1_7ngo.html

Save the Children Australia
Level 6, 250 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
Locked Bag 5000, Fitzroy VIC 3065

Telephone: +61 3 9938 2000
Facsimile: +61 3 9938 2099
info@savethechildren.org.au
www.savethechildren.org.au

Member of the Save the Children International
Member of ACFID
Registered as Save the Children Fund Australia
ABN: 99 008 610 035 ACN:088 610 035