



media release

Australian Council for International Development

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Bipartisanship on aid very welcome, but where is the commitment to 0.7%?

A bipartisan commitment to Australian aid reaching 0.5% of Gross National Income is very welcome. However, given a world that is struggling to halve global poverty by 2015, it is disappointing that both major parties failed to announce a clear timetable for reaching the United Nations Goal of 0.7%, said the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak body for Australian aid and development organisations. ACFID was responding to today's foreign affairs debate between Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Julie Bishop at the National Press Club.

"We welcome the reaffirmation of the bipartisan commitment to 0.5% of Gross National Income for effective Australian aid. But a commitment to a clear timetable to 0.7% of GNI was missing from both major parties' statements. A target of 0.7% Gross National Income for aid would still only represent around two per cent of the total annual federal budget, yet the powerful effects of such an increase on the lives of the poor in developing countries would be incalculable."

"The Coalition's welcome announcement of a new Minister for Development Assistance reflects the importance of both a growing Australian aid program and the attention required to meet the challenge of halving global poverty by 2015."

"Women are integral to efforts to reduce poverty in developing countries, therefore it is a timely and welcome initiative of the Coalition to support women's leadership in the region."

"We support the Government's focus on furthering the work of the United Nations. The UN must lead global efforts to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015 and also to promote world peace."

"ACFID believes Australia's relations with Pacific nations are very important to ensuring regional prosperity and best served through respectful partnerships and a Parliamentary Secretary for the region."

"We are pleased that both parties support the Millennium Development Goals. Further, we are encouraged that the Government has been steadily increasing funding to Australian not-for-profit aid and development organisations, and it is very welcome that the Coalition is also looking to do the same."

"ACFID believes it as vital that any funding for climate change efforts in developing countries is new money and additional to existing aid commitments. Climate change funding should not take away from aid committed to reducing poverty."

Last week, ACFID called on all political candidates to respond to the recommendations made in its [Call to the Parties: Better Aid, More Aid, Just Aid](#).

For further information: Marc Purcell; 0450 961 561

The Australian Council for International Development is an independent national association of Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of international aid and development.

ph: 02 6285 1816
fax: 02 6285 1720
email: main@acfid.asn.au
website: www.acfid.asn.au

**Mail: Private Bag 3
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Address: 14 Napier Close
DEAKIN ACT 2600**