



media release

Australian Council for International Development

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Australia's Aid Agencies Call for World Leaders to StandUp! for the MDGs

As world leaders prepare to gather in New York for the Millennium Development Goals Review Summit on September 20, Australia's leading aid agencies are warning that the world is in danger of failing to meet its commitments by 2015.

With Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd attending the summit as Australia's representative, key aid and development groups are calling on the Australian Government to give him a mandate to drive the creation and adoption of a bold, concrete and accountable action plan to meet the MDGs and lift millions of people out of poverty.

"A decade after the world's leaders agreed to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015, it's time to stand up and make a real commitment to achieving the MDGs," says Marc Purcell spokesperson and Executive Director of the Australian Council for International Development.

"There has been some progress in areas such as child health and education, which shows that change is indeed possible, but much more still needs to be done.

"That's why Australia's aid agencies are coming together to call on the Gillard Government to commit to real outcomes in New York."

Mr Purcell said the Australian Government must play its part in pushing for urgent action, along with committing to a long overdue increase in the overseas aid budget to 0.7% of national income. While this investment is modest, the difference it will make to millions of people living in poverty throughout the world will be huge.

With less than five years until the deadline for achieving the MDGs, progress is slowing and in some cases regressing. Without urgent and real commitments by governments, achieving the goals will become increasingly elusive; Australia must play a significant part to ensure they are met.

"Poverty is not yet history - it's time to stand up for the MDGs," said Mr Purcell.

"Currently 64 million people are on the brink of falling into extreme poverty, 375 million more will be affected by natural disasters in the next five years, and nearly nine million children under five will die each year from avoidable, poverty-related causes.

"Millions of people around the world, including tens of thousands of Australians, will soon be uniting to call for further action on the MDGs as part of the StandUp campaign.

"Australia's aid agencies are asking our new Government to heed their call and take real action at the summit," said Mr Purcell.

The agencies warn that, without greater leadership, allocation of funds and commitment there is a very real risk that the Millennium Development Goals will not be reached.

The time for rhetoric has passed and the world's poorest and most vulnerable are now counting on our leaders to make real progress towards eradicating poverty.

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ACFID president Dr Meredith Burgmann will be attending the MDG Review Summit as part of the official Australian Delegation.

