



## **media release**

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### **Australian Council for International Development**

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#### **No Excuses for World's Developed Countries Government Aid Announcement Welcomed**

This morning (Australian time) Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd addressed the United Nations General Assembly.

"His message to developed nations was loud and clear," said Dr Meredith Burgmann, President of the Australian Council for International Development.

"We not only have to talk the talk, but walk the walk."

Mr Rudd clarified spending priorities for the Gillard Government in his speech, in line with their commitment to double Australia's aid budget by 2015.

"Of all of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) priorities, the least progress has been made in addressing maternal and infant mortality," Dr Burgmann said.

"Ensuring women do not die during child birth and that children survive beyond the age of five is not rocket science.

"We need practical measures such as providing enough mid-wives, ensuring the availability of adequate health clinics, access to essential inoculations and the political will to ensure these measures reach the world's poorest people.

"The Gillard Government announcement today that \$1.6 billion of their projected aid budget increases will go directly towards women's and children's health is a welcome step towards showing this political will.

"Also significant is the commitment to provide at least 0.15 per cent of our Gross National Income in aid to the world's poorest nations," she said.

Mr. Rudd put the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) firmly, and explicitly, at the heart of the Australian aid program in his address.

"Achieving the MDGs is one of the greatest tasks facing the globe, and Mr. Rudd has confirmed that Australia's commitment will remain steadfast," Dr Burgmann said.

"There is no excuse for developed nations to waiver in their commitments to the world's poorest people. After the Summit, we expect to see action to fulfill the promises they have made.

"For our part, Australian NGOs still eagerly await the Gillard Government's timetable for lifting Australia's contribution to aid to 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income," Dr Burgmann concluded.

**For further information, contact: Joy Kyriacou 0412 084 782**

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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](mailto:main@acfid.asn.au)  
**website:** [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au)

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