



media release

Australian Council for International Development

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Afghanistan: Calling for a 10 Year Aid Commitment Greater Aid Transparency Required

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is calling for the Federal Government to commit to a ten-year humanitarian and development program for the people of Afghanistan.

As the peak body for Australian aid and development organisations, we have written to Parliamentarians ahead of next week's debate on Afghanistan calling for greater transparency and accountability of Australia's civilian and military assistance.

"Afghanistan is the second poorest country in the world and its people need a long-term aid commitment if their development needs are to be effectively met. This should be a predictable and timetabled pledge to provide at least AUD\$100 million per year in development assistance for the next ten years," said ACFID Executive Director Marc Purcell.

"Our experience shows that short-term bursts of aid are not effective due to corruption and the inability of the Afghan Government to absorb large amounts of money over a short period. Steady, predictable delivery of aid over long periods of time brings better results.

"Transparency and public disclosure of Australia's aid expenditure to Afghanistan and its effectiveness is insufficient. The ADF do not appear to have formally evaluated the effectiveness of their aid work. The Canadian Government reports to its own Parliament on a quarterly basis with a breakdown of all official development assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan. Australia should do the same," Mr Purcell said.

"A Senate Select Committee should undertake an inquiry on the future of Australia's long-term role in Afghanistan, with similar terms of reference to inquiries that have occurred in the UK, US and Canada. This would be the best way to deliberate on the nature of our long-term aid and development commitment," Mr Purcell concluded.

Further information:

- In the 2010-11 Federal Budget, Afghanistan is the fourth largest country recipient of Australian ODA (\$123m) and the AusAID Afghanistan country program receives \$106m.
- In 2009-10, AusAID estimates that around 10% of the AusAID country program was spent in Uruzgan Province. This is expected to increase to between 14-20% in 2010-11.
- The Defence budget is estimated to be ten times that of the Australian aid budget to Afghanistan, at approximately AUD\$1.2 billion.

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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.

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