



# media release

**Australian Council for International Development**

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## **AID REVIEW WELCOME FOR CHALLENGES AHEAD**

The government's announcement of an independent review of the effectiveness of the Australian aid program is welcome and needed, says the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak body for Australian aid and development non-government organisations.

ACFID has previously called for such a review because we believe there are some big challenges facing Australia's aid program in coming years, as it scales up to 0.5% of Gross National Income by 2015/16.

"This review is welcome as the Australia aid budget is one of the fastest growing in the world. By 2015/16 AusAID, the government's aid agency, will be amongst the top five government agencies in terms of disbursements," said Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision Australia and ACFID board member.

"Australians want the most effective use of their tax dollars in overseas aid. A review is an excellent tool to help ensure this outcome."

Julia Newton-Howes, CEO of CARE Australia and ACFID board member, said that this review comes at a crucial time, with five years left to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

"We have a responsibility to meet the commitment we gave the 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty - to ensure our aid funding really makes the most difference it can to their lives. The review should acknowledge that the majority of those living in extreme poverty are women and we know that an investment in women is one of the best investments we can make to reduce poverty for entire communities."

"Australia is in a unique position in our part of the world as fifty per cent of our aid goes to countries in Asia and the Pacific where governance is weak, or there is conflict. As such, we need to know how Australian aid will be best delivered in these difficult places," said Marc Purcell, Executive Director of ACFID.

"We should ensure that aid is targeted towards the least developed countries in the world and reaches the poorest people in any country in which we operate."

"Australia can be a leader in tackling global poverty- we have the skills, talent and good relations with our neighbours; all that is required is determination and clear vision - a review will help with this," Mr Purcell concluded.

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