



media release

Australian Council for International Development

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Australia must act on world hunger

ACFID welcomes the Crawford Fund's report 'A food secure world: how Australia can help' released today at the National Press Club of Australia. The report shows that Australia has a major role to play in world food security and in combating world hunger.

"According to the latest UN World Food Programme figures, there are currently 920 million starving people in the world and an additional two billion people suffer from hidden hunger or under nutrition," Paul O'Callaghan, ACFID Executive Director, said.

"ACFID commends the Labor Government for its \$30 million contribution to the World Food Program, \$50 million funding to the World Bank and for its current effort to create a long-term action plan for food security," he said.

"However, given Australia's exceptional assets in agricultural research and technological knowledge, Australia needs to do more to help eradicate the causes of extreme world hunger. Australia has a good track record of assisting developing countries to boost their agricultural productivity. We just need to give this area of work a stronger focus," said Mr O'Callaghan.

ACFID recommends that a larger share of Australia's official aid program be invested in rural development. Key steps would be to expand the scale of partnerships by Australia's Centre for International Agricultural Research with developing countries and to increase Australia's core contribution to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). We should also strengthen Australia's post-emergency response capacity to save future harvests in disaster-stricken regions.

Mr O'Callaghan also urged the Government to provide additional domestic support to attract young Australians into study and careers in agricultural science. In this way, Australia is more likely to remain at the forefront of the types of agricultural R&D that are most in need by developing countries.

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