



World Vision



Australian Red Cross
THE POWER OF HUMANITY



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 6am, Wednesday 10th December

Aid agencies join forces to appeal for action on global hunger

Five of Australia's largest International Humanitarian Organisations have joined forces on International Human Rights Day to appeal for government and public action on the most basic of human needs – food.

“The global food crisis is hitting hard,” said Oxfam chief executive Andrew Hewett. “In Australia it means we’ve seen rising food prices in supermarkets. But in developing countries the effect is much more severe, and people are starving.”

“Australian families are seeing that it costs more and more to buy their groceries each week, but for poor families in developing countries living on less than \$1 per day, rising food prices are catastrophic,” said Red Cross chief executive Robert Tickner. “In Bangladesh a two kilogram bag of rice now costs half the daily income of a poor family.”

The agencies have made a joint call for the Australian government to:

- target agricultural aid at supporting women and other small scale farmers
- take the lead in developing a pro-poor conclusion to the Doha round of trade talks
- focus Australian aid money on disaster risk reduction, investing in food production, storage, access and preparation of food by poor families, as well as long-term social safety nets
- continue to invest in agricultural research, and share the benefits of this research freely with developing countries
- ban using food crops for biofuels or divert arable land for the production of biofuels. The government should work through APEC and bilateral relationships to encourage our neighbours to adopt the same policy.

The agencies agreed the most important facet of their work to tackle food shortages is ongoing public support.

“The Australian public have always been exceptionally generous when disasters hit,” said Caritas chief executive Jack de Groot. “We know that we are living in the shadows of difficult economic times, but now more than ever we ask you to help us meet this challenge.”

Tim Costello (World Vision), Julia Newton-Howes (CARE), Paul O’Callaghan (ACFID), Jack de Groot (Caritas) and Andrew Hewett (Oxfam) will hold a media conference at ACFID House, 14 Napier Close, Deakin (Canberra) at 12:45 pm, Wednesday December 10th.

Media Contacts (following page) >>

Tim Costello (World Vision), Julia Newton-Howes (CARE), Paul O’Callaghan (ACFID), Jack de Groot (Caritas), Andrew Hewett (Oxfam) and Robert Tickner (Red Cross) are all available for interview.

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