



media release

Australian Council for International Development

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Australian NGOs stand ready to expand assistance in Sri Lanka

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) welcomes the anticipated end to the decades-long conflict in Sri Lanka which has claimed over 70,000 lives and plunged 250,000 civilians into a dire humanitarian crisis.

ACFID welcomes last week's response from the Australian Government to the United Nations' appeal for emergency international assistance that was supported by the Coalition.

"ACFID commends the Australian Government's contribution of \$23.5 million since December 2008 to assist the civilian victims of the conflict. The continued commitment of the Australian Government and involvement of the United Nations remain necessary to ensure a lasting settlement. All rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts must be based on international human rights standards," said Kelly Bruce, Acting Executive Director of ACFID.

Ms Bruce noted mounting concern for the basic human rights of 200,000 Sri Lankan citizens in internal displacement camps near the conflict zone.

"The protection of the rights of civilians who are displaced and the eventual safe resettlement to their home areas will be major challenges over the coming months and years," Ms Bruce said.

The camps for internally-displaced people should be administered in line with international humanitarian standards. Also, the process of evacuation from the conflict zone should be open to monitoring by the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN officials.

ACFID member agencies are ready to provide emergency assistance. Many agencies are already on the ground saving lives by providing urgent assistance including clean water and sanitation facilities, food and medical supplies.

"The humanitarian need is overwhelming and Australian NGOs stand ready to expand the provision of assistance once the situation stabilises enough to allow sufficient access to the civilian victims of the conflict," Ms Bruce concluded.

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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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Editorial notes:

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is an independent national association of Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of international aid and development. ACFID administers a self-regulatory Code of Conduct, committing members to high standards of integrity, transparency and accountability.

All ACFID member agencies are accountable to the ACFID Code of Conduct. Through this standard they are informed by the “Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief” and the “Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response”.

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