



media release

Australian Council for International Development

13 May 2009

3/09

Aid Budget falls behind escalating global poverty

Times are tough for Australians, but people in developing countries are facing a true emergency. The global financial crisis is expected to push an additional 90 million people into extreme poverty in 2009 alone. This would raise the number of people living in extreme poverty across the globe to over 1.2 billion.

“The financial crisis, coupled with global issues such as food security, climate change and increasing levels of extreme poverty, is rapidly escalating the needs of the poorest of the poor and will lead to further social and political instability in our region,” said The Hon Margaret Reid AO, ACFID’s President.

ACFID welcomes the Government’s focus on the Millennium Development Goals. The aid program is now explicitly guided by these central principles, which form the blueprint for eradicating poverty.

ACFID supports AusAID’s policy initiatives, in particular those focused on responding to the financial crisis as well as education, health and infrastructure programs. The Aid Budget also outlines positive steps to tackle the food security issues many developing countries face. However, one of the greatest immediate challenges for the Asia and Pacific regions, climate change, has not been recognised in the new funding initiatives.

“We welcome the modest increase in aid funding levels in 2009/10 and are pleased that the Government has reiterated its commitment to achieve Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels of 0.5% of GNI by 2015/16,” said Ms Reid.

“ACFID is, however, disappointed that the Government has not taken this opportunity to seriously address the issues that people in developing countries are facing now. Without appropriate funding levels, the Government’s acknowledgement of the human cost of this financial crisis is mere rhetoric,” Ms Reid said.

ACFID is further concerned that the timetable to achieve the commitment of 0.5% of GNI will slip further as the difficult economic times continue. Every day more people in developing countries face extreme poverty and children die from hunger, malnutrition and preventable diseases. We sincerely hope that the Australian Government will take leadership in its role as a good international citizen in years to come.

Contact: The Hon Margaret Reid AO
ph: 02 6285 1816

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.

ph: 02 6285 1816
fax: 02 6285 1720
email: main@acfid.asn.au
website: www.acfid.asn.au

Mail: Private Bag 3
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Address: 14 Napier Close
DEAKIN ACT 2600