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**Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa**

**January 2010**

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Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Information provided by: Australian Council for International Development

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## 1. Introduction

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (the Committee) regarding the Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa (the Inquiry). ACFID's submission to the Committee primarily responds to the subject of development assistance co-operation and capacity building with the countries of Africa.

ACFID is the national association of Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of international aid and development. ACFID has seventy-one members operating in more than one hundred developing countries. ACFID members' expenditure is over one billion dollars a year, with over \$800 million raised via the Australian public in the 2007-2008 financial year.

Since 1965, ACFID has assisted the Australian aid and development sector to promote sustainable human development so that people can enjoy the full range of human rights, fulfill their basic needs free from poverty and live in dignity. As the peak council for the aid and development sector in Australia, ACFID represents the experience and expertise of Australian civil society organisations working in partnership with local organisations in development activities around the world. Australian NGOs have long standing connections with the countries of Africa.

This submission has been prepared with input from members of the ACFID Africa Working Group (the Africa Working Group). The Working Group consists of around 30 Australian NGOs with particular expertise and experience in Africa, which shares information among members, assists in the development of policy positions, and engages in consultations with AusAID and other organizations on matters pertaining to the group's interests.

In 2008, almost 35% of funds donated by the Australian community to Australian NGOs were directed to programs in a range of countries in Africa. In 2007-2008, the Australian community provided over \$280 million to NGO programs in Africa.<sup>1</sup> This clearly shows the NGO face of Australian assistance to Africa and the Australian public support for development activities in Africa. ACFID member agencies supported development programs in 39 countries in Africa. By way of contrast, since 2002, around 3 per cent of Australia's total annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) went to Africa, representing \$163.9 million in 2009-2010.

*Refer to the attachments for a list of the large range of NGOs, countries and development projects supported as well as case studies.*

## 2. Development in Africa

African growth and development is changing. Prior to the Global Financial Crisis, much of Africa's estimated 5.5% economic growth in 2006 was attributed to China's rapidly growing demand for African commodities. Trade between China and Africa surpassed \$52 billion in the first nine months of 2007 and is expected to top \$70 billion by the end of the year. By the end of 2010, China-Africa trade is scheduled to total over \$100 billion.

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<sup>1</sup> The total funds provided by the Australian community to Australian NGOs was \$812,187,129, according to consolidated data from ACFID member organisations' annual reports.

Despite this growth as a result of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in many countries across the continent, according to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals Report of 2009, the countries of Africa are tracking poorly on achieving the MDGs. In particular, the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have under performed expectations in the improvement of health conditions, reducing hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability.

ACFID's members are concerned by the lack of progress made in many of the countries of Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the high levels of child and maternal mortality and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

The highest levels of child mortality are found in sub-Saharan Africa, where in 2007 close to one in seven children died before their fifth birthday. This has resulted in an increase in the absolute number of under-five deaths from 4.2 million in 1990 to 4.6 million in 2007.<sup>2</sup>

Every year, 536,000 women die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or in the six weeks following delivery. Half of all maternal deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa. The risks are higher for both mother and child when pregnancy occurs at too young an age.<sup>3</sup>

Two thirds of those living with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa, most of whom are women.<sup>4</sup> The absolute number of people living with HIV is still increasing in that region and AIDS-related illnesses remain the leading cause of death.

Africa is the only region in the world where per capita food production has fallen in the last 30 years. Drought frequency in the Horn of Africa, for example, is now believed to be three out of every four years; previously drought was experienced roughly once a decade.

Some 23 million people across the Horn of Africa are threatened with severe hunger following consecutive years of drought, leaving them in need of emergency food aid.

### **3. Recommendations**

ACFID recommends that the Australian Government adapt its approach to development as follows.

1. Concentrate development assistance in Africa to a limited number of countries that are in most need of additional resources, and also where Australian NGOs and the government have comparative advantage and demonstrated quality programmes;

The following countries in Eastern and Southern Africa should be prioritised: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2. Increase the amount of aid channelled through civil society organisations in Africa, as well as those in Australia (recent increased funding to Australian NGOs is acknowledged);

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<sup>2</sup> UN, The Millennium Goals Report 2009.

<sup>3</sup> UN, The Millennium Goals Report 2009.

<sup>4</sup> UN, The Millennium Goals Report 2009.

3. Ensure that it promotes development programs with the Australian NGO sector, which is already engaged with their African NGO partners as well as working with African Community Based Organisations directly;
4. Increase the 2015-16 aid commitment from 0.5% to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) with a large part of this increase utilised to address extreme poverty in those countries of Africa that are currently under resourced;
5. Improve the predictability of aid (as agreed to in the Paris Declaration<sup>5</sup>) by providing:
  - a) full information on annual commitments and actual disbursements that the countries of Africa are in a position to accurately record all aid flows in their budget estimates and their accounting systems; and
  - b) regular information on their rolling three to five-year forward expenditure and/or implementation plans, with at least indicative resource allocations.
6. In line with the Accra Agenda for Action<sup>6</sup>, ensure the development and sharing of transparent plans in order to fulfil its commitment to the Paris Declaration, using country systems in all forms of development assistance;
7. Focus scholarships on inter-Africa exchanges and African based educational opportunities, with a greater focus on retaining local and nationally educated citizens;
8. Not invest excessive resources in technical assistance programs in Africa;
9. Promote Australian identity via support of Australian NGOs rather than overly favouring channelling taxpayer funds through bilateral arrangements and multilateral institutions;
10. Utilise Australian comparative advantage in the following proven NGO approaches in Africa:
  - a) multi-sector approaches: an effective approach at the community level involves a multi-sectoral response, which addresses both practical and strategic needs of the women, men and children who are living in poverty and experience marginalisation and discrimination. This should encompass HIV prevention, care and mitigation of impact; support for sustainable livelihoods, rights of women, children and other marginalised groups (such as the poorest, people living with HIV and AIDS, youth); civil society strengthening and disaster risk reduction.
  - b) Sustainable Livelihoods including food security, Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change, emergency responses and protection;

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<sup>5</sup> The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005 at the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) meeting, commits adhering donors, including Australia, and developing countries to improving the distribution and management of aid in order to increase its effectiveness. Over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials committed their countries and organisations to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.

<sup>6</sup> The statement by the Australian Government delegation, made in Accra in September 2008, confirmed an overarching commitment to the Accra Agenda for Action reforms.

- c) HIV and AIDS prevention, care, mitigation and support (with a strong focus on youth), broader community health (including Maternal Child Health) and technical and institutional capacity development of civil society;
  - d) women and children's rights, gender equality, rights of other groups who are marginalised or have their rights violated through development, by strengthening engagement with civil society, promoting good governance, capacity building of duty bearers and protection of human rights and rights in national law;
  - e) child survival, participation in decisions that affect them and child protection through capacity building of various stakeholders;
11. Retain a distinct emphasis on HIV and AIDS in the forthcoming AusAID framework for Africa;
  12. Replicate eye care interventions that draw on the success of the Australian Blindness Initiative in the Asia and Pacific regions;
  13. Build a stronger focus on women's and girls' rights incorporated into the Australian Government's development approach;
  14. Bilateral relations and development assistance cooperation to Africa should increase its focus on adaptation to the impacts of climate change;
  15. Develop a policy to better address chronic crises as part of AusAID's Humanitarian Action Plan;
  16. Strengthen resourcing and commitment to the protection of civilians in high-risk areas of Africa, including the Sudan, and
  17. Contribute to international efforts towards:
    - a) ensuring any multilateral trade agreement (emerging from renewed World Trade Organisation Doha Development Round negotiations) meets the human development needs of poor countries and delivers global economic growth that is equitable and sustainable;
    - b) maintaining pressure on rich countries such as the United States, Japan and also the European Union, to significantly reduce or eliminate agricultural subsidies, and
    - c) acknowledge the limitations of certain developing countries in Africa to opening their agricultural markets in ways that undermine their food security, rural development and the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people.

#### **4. The Scale and Geographical Focus of ACFID members in Africa**

Australian NGOs have traditionally been key development partners for Australian development assistance to Africa. More than half of member agencies actively work in various areas.

The Australian community provides considerable support to Australian NGOs for development programs in Africa. Each year, ACFID receives reports from member organizations on their development funding and produces a consolidated report. This report

shows, in dollar terms, the top ten countries who received funding through ACFID members (refer to the table below).

*Refer to the attachments for a list of the large range of NGOs, countries and development projects supported as well as case studies.*

In 2008, almost 35% of funds donated by the Australian community to Australian NGOs were directed to programs in a range of countries in Africa, representing over \$280 million. This clearly shows the NGO face of Australian assistance to Africa and the Australian public support for development activities in Africa. By way of contrast, since 2002, around 3 per cent of Australia's total annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) went to Africa, representing \$163.9 million in 2009-10.

## 5. Future Geographical Focus

Members of the Working Group have identified a number of countries where AusAID funding, through the forthcoming Africa Framework for development assistance, would be welcomed. The following countries in Eastern and Southern Africa were prioritised: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Other countries our agencies mentioned were: Ethiopia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Members were also concerned by the impacts of displaced people from Somalia and Darfur through cross border activities. Some agencies were interested in the possibilities of funding being provided to countries in West Africa.

### Recommendation 1

ACFID recommends concentrating development assistance in Africa to a limited number of countries that are in most need of additional resources, and also where Australian NGOs and the government have comparative advantage and demonstrated quality programmes.

Table 1. Top ten countries for funding by Australian NGOs 2007-8<sup>7</sup>.

	Country	Funding from ANGOs in 2007 and 2008 – A\$
1.	Ethiopia	\$ 12.72 m
2.	Kenya	\$ 12.04 m
3.	Uganda	\$ 10.71 m
4.	Sudan	\$ 8.50 m
5.	Zambia	\$ 7.62 m
6.	Zimbabwe	\$ 7.54 m
7.	Tanzania	\$ 7.39
8.	Mozambique	\$5.76 m

<sup>7</sup> This data is derived from an optional, but more detailed section of ACFID's annual statistical survey of member agencies and signatories to the Code of Conduct. As providing this information is optional - 55% of members responded - it is not comprehensive.

	Country	Funding from ANGOs in 2007 and 2008 – A\$
9.	Malawi	\$5.69 m
10.	South Africa	\$5.13 m

## 6. Benefits of Working with Australian NGOs in Africa

Supporting a robust NGO program will give depth, greater reach and a stronger Australian identity to Australia's presence in Africa.

Australian NGOs work directly with local organisations and communities strengthening capacity to address development needs and engage with government duty bearers. This is not only effective in ensuring sustained change at the community level but provides an environment in which localised government can implement pro-poor policies. With the increasing emphasis on decentralisation, civil society needs to have the capacity to engage with government; the work that NGOs do to create environments in which the most marginalised and vulnerable have a voice is critical.

NGOs have achieved much in the recent past working in Africa (with both AusAID and Australian public funding). This is evident in the recent evaluations of the AusAID-funded Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) NGO programs, which also offer significant opportunities for scaling up.

For example, the "Beyond Basic Needs" paper produced by the UK's prestigious Overseas Development Institute (ODI) as part of AusAID's research papers under APAC, looked at the approach taken by the Australian NGOs involved with the APAC Program. The paper states that "*development programs work best when they reflect the local reality and respond to both rights violations and a lack of access to services*" and notes a number of strengths of Australian NGOs approaches including:

- high levels of participation and responsibility;
- breaking barriers that impede access to services;
- seeking legitimacy; targeting and working with unconventional partners;
- standard and innovative ways of measuring change, and
- the significant involvement of the community to allow for sustainability.

It is through long-standing involvement of NGOs with the communities in which we work that we are able to achieve these levels of understanding and participation at the community level. NGOs contribute to building relationships between the state and citizens by fostering demand for good governance, which can have a greater impact on building effective governance than direct donor support for state institutions.

### Recommendation 2

In line with the OECD Development Advisory Committee Peer Review of Australia 2009, we suggest that Australia should increase the amount of aid channelled through civil society organisations in Africa, as well as Australia (recent increased funding to Australian NGOs is acknowledged).

### Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Australian Government ensure that it promotes development programs that engage with the Australian NGO sector who are already working closely with their African NGO partners as well as African Community Based Organisations directly. We would argue that fostering these relationships is valuable in raising Australia's visibility and profile in the region. We understand the requirement for a high political profile for Australian

aid, but we would like the framework to use a range of strategies, including direct engagement at the NGO level.

Table 2. Value adding of ANGO approaches to development in Africa

NGO approaches	Value of ANGO approaches
Rights based approaches	<p>Many NGO approaches focus on community development and strengthening civil society from community to national levels, to improve governance and increase the responsiveness of government structures and policies to citizens. Many NGOs take rights based approaches to development programs applicable to a range of sectors. This involves working with citizens and community groups to improve understanding of rights (human rights and/or rights in national law) and structures for assistance for protection/redress. This work does not appear to be included in the current draft AusAID framework (or narrow view of the MDGs).</p> <p>A focus on work with communities and with other stakeholders including governments to promote and protect the rights of the poorest and most marginalised groups is a key focus of NGO approaches, which is important to recognise as an area of special expertise, where multilateral, bilateral and managing agent delivery mechanisms may not apply.</p>
Focus on the poorest in rural areas	<p>NGOs work mostly in rural areas where often the poorest and most disadvantaged are located, where most food production happens (MDG 1).</p>
Integrated community development approach	<p>Combining an integrated community development approach with capacity building and advocacy has been an effective way to enable men and women to realise their rights to livelihoods.</p>
Collaboration, linkages, and dialogue for greater responsiveness to change	<p>Our strength lies in part in our continuing dedication to working collaboratively with our partners, allies and other stakeholders to affect changes at local, national and international levels. We have expertise in brokering relationships and facilitating dialogue, which means we are well equipped to respond to new challenges and ever changing political and social environments.</p>
Cause and Effect - going beyond just the effects of poverty	<p>NGO programs facilitate poverty alleviation activities, which address the underlying causes of poverty over and above meeting the immediate needs of people.</p> <p>We put a strong emphasis on capacity building of partners and working with networks of CSOs and churches to address root causes of poverty. This often includes advocacy to tackle the root causes of poverty and injustice, which are often political in nature.</p>

NGO approaches	Value of ANGO approaches
Bottom up approaches, Inclusive Development and Appropriate Technologies	NGOs are in a better position to facilitate bottom-up approaches to development. Working within communities ensures that the most vulnerable and marginalised are not ignored or excluded, and solutions often use simple technologies that can be easily accessible and maintained.
Integrated and participatory approaches	Participation of women, children and other groups who are marginalised is key to much NGO work.
Enhancing government policy and service delivery through experience of work at the community level	Multilateral and bilateral programs work within government policy and government priorities whereas NGO programs can complement policy, provide assistance targeting other needs identified by communities and use this to influence policy development sensitive to the needs of the poor.
Responsive to local needs and connectedness to communities	NGOs can also be more responsive to local needs and adjust models in the light of different contexts. The staff of many NGOs are already known and engaged in the local community.
Committed partnerships with local civil society groups and organisations	ANGOs have long-established partnerships at grass roots levels.
Engagement at multiple levels with wide range of stakeholders	ANGOs work with a wide range of stakeholders including communities, local and central governments, UN agencies and other development agencies.
Impact at the community level	NGOs emphasise different systems/methodologies for achieving impact at the community level – with an emphasis on participatory methodologies that larger, bilateral and multilateral agencies might struggle to implement.
High level of accountability	ANGOs provide a high level of accountability to our partners and are working to improve this via ACFID in 2010.

## 7. Australia's Official Development Cooperation Program in Africa

Australian NGOs working in international development are very supportive of Australia's recent and renewed engagement with the countries of Africa. As noted by the Foreign Minister on 29 January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Australia 'wants to be part of Africa's future in ways where our expertise and experience can make a unique and positive

contribution<sup>8</sup>. ACFID welcomes the Foreign Minister's emphasis on accelerating progress towards the MDGs and addressing peace and security challenges.

ACFID welcomes the increase in development assistance to the continent from \$116.4 million in 2008/09 to \$163.9 million in 2009/10.

ACFID welcomes the opening of AusAID posts in Ghana, Ethiopia, and plans for others.

ACFID sees it as critical that the countries of Africa continue to benefit from the commitment to scale up Australia's aid program to 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16. However, current global Official Development Assistance (ODA) will not be sufficient to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### **Recommendation 4**

ACFID recommends that the Australian Government increase its 2015 aid commitment from 0.5 to 0.7 per cent of GNI with a large part of this increase utilised to address extreme poverty in those countries of Africa that are currently under resourced.

ACFID acknowledges that the political support base for growth in aid spending hinges on perceptions of community attitudes about budget priorities, particularly in light of the recent global financial crisis. Australian NGOs play an important role in fostering increased understanding and support in Australia for development in Africa. The Make Poverty History campaign and Micah Challenge initiatives have been key to harnessing and broadening engagement by the Australian community on development issues.

The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005 at the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) meeting, commits adhering donors - including Australia - and developing countries to improving the distribution and management of aid in order to increase its effectiveness<sup>9</sup>. Through the Paris Declaration, Australia agreed that greater predictability in the provision of aid flows is needed to enable developing countries to effectively plan and manage their development programmes over the short and medium term. The Overseas

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<sup>8</sup> Available at [www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2009/090129\\_african\\_union.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2009/090129_african_union.html) last accessed 26.03.09

<sup>9</sup> The Paris Declaration contains five key principles that target donors and partner countries in order to improve the effectiveness of aid, including: partner country ownership of development implementation; donor alignment with partner country development strategies; harmonisation of donor development approaches and activities; managing for better results through national development strategies and performance frameworks; mutual accountability between partners and donors.

A significant component of the Paris Declaration is the inclusion of indicators and measurable targets for development effectiveness against these five reinforcing principles. The Paris Declaration remains an important initiative for the reform of development practices for its emphasis on the establishment of partnerships between donors and developing countries, developing country ownership of the development process, as well as mutual accountability for improved development results. Over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials committed their countries and organisations to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.

[http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html)

Development Institute has demonstrated the crucial role greater aid transparency plays in ensuring effectiveness<sup>10</sup>.

### **Recommendation 5**

In respect to the Paris Declaration, ACFID recommends Australia provide the following in a timely manner to improve the predictability of aid:

- a) full information on annual commitments and actual disbursements so that the countries of Africa are in a position to accurately record all aid flows in their budget estimates and their accounting systems, and
- b) regular information on their rolling three- to five-year forward expenditure and/or implementation plans, with at least indicative resource allocations.

Australia should also work with the countries of Africa at the international level on ways to further improve the medium term predictability of aid, including by developing tools to measure it.

ACFID has welcomed the government's initiative of the Pacific Partnerships for Development and, over time, lessons learnt from this positive approach should inform the approach to development programming in Africa. In line with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Action Agenda (AAA), ACFID urges that all bilateral aid be delivered through partnerships with recipient governments and communities, with a strong focus on mutual accountability.

The Accra Agenda for Action is an international agreement that aims to highlight the need for specific reforms in the aid sector to achieve improved aid effectiveness and is designed to complement the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> The statement by the Australian Government delegation, made in Accra in September 2008, confirmed an overarching commitment to the AAA reforms.

### **Recommendation 6**

In line with the AAA requirement for clear plans and long-term commitments, ACFID recommends Australia ensure the development and sharing of transparent plans for undertaking their Paris commitments; using country systems in all forms of development assistance.

## **8. AusAID's draft Framework 2009-2016**

The forthcoming Framework aims to contribute to alleviating poverty and to reaching the poor and vulnerable who are being left out of mainstream development.

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<sup>10</sup> Sam Moon and Tim Williamson "Greater aid transparency: crucial for aid effectiveness", Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Project Briefing No 35 January 2010

<sup>11</sup> The AAA highlights three key areas where progress is required to ensure continued improvements in aid reform, including: strengthening developing country ownership of development; more effective and inclusive partnerships for development; delivering and accounting for development results.

Table 3. AusAID Africa Framework

Proposed AusAID Framework for Development Assistance to Africa 2009-2016			
<p><b>Support for MDGs in key sectors</b> Builds on work in southern and eastern Africa Delivered in partnership with others Multi-year funding for agreed and defined programs</p>	<p>MDG 1: Food Security and Agriculture</p> <p>Key Partners: African Union's CAADP and associated institutions<sup>12</sup></p>	<p>MDG 4 &amp; 5: Maternal and Child Health</p> <p>Key Partners: UNICEF UNFPA<sup>13</sup> Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital</p>	<p>MDG 7: Water and Sanitation</p> <p>Key Partners: World Bank African Development Bank</p>
<p><b>Capacity building and other cross-sectoral support</b> Continent-wide May be delivered by Australia or in partnership with others Flexible and responsive funding to emerging issues Prioritises, but is not limited to, the key MDG sectors above</p>	<p>Building Capacity of African Partners (e.g. scholarships, technical assistance)</p>		

At the time of consultations between AusAID and ACFID regarding the Framework, in mid-2009, it appeared overall that the Framework could benefit from a political, social and economic context analysis. It would be helpful to include a contextual overview of development issues and progress (or lack of it) in relation to pan-African issues, other disparities and progress towards each of the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa. This would normally be undertaken for country assistance frameworks and strategies too. Increased attention to the complexities of development challenges and uneven progress towards achieving the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) would be helpful in informing the further development of the draft Framework. Consideration of the key policy drivers and pan-African institutions including the African Union, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and New Economic Partnerships for Development (NEPAD) and how AusAID proposes to work with these institutions would be worthwhile.

ACFID would like to see the interconnectedness of many development issues, which make people vulnerable to poverty, better articulated in the Framework. Such a Framework also needs to reflect the Paris Declaration, refer to human rights, transparency and accountability.

The four MDGs identified by AusAID as a basis for the Framework are important but the ACFID Africa Working Group believes that these alone are too narrow, as the MDGs are

<sup>12</sup> CAADP is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program, managed by the African Union's New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Associated institutions include the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, the African Agricultural Markets Program, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research, and Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa.

<sup>13</sup> UNFPA is the United Nations Population Fund.

really an important global communication tool (which ACFID strongly supports), but not necessarily a basis for aid programming in complex environments on their own. It is unclear whether it is intended that the MDG targets are the focus, or whether the MDGs are being used as a shorthand description for the broader sector of which the MDG target is one part.

ACFID suggests that additional sectoral areas where Australian NGOs have programs and expertise are: HIV and AIDS, active citizenship and civil society building, gender and rights, security and peace building, climate change and youth. Unlike some of the areas proposed for expansion, NGO programs in Africa have been comprehensively evaluated and NGOs go through a rigorous accreditation process with AusAID to be eligible for government funding.

### **Prospects for increased funding to NGO work in Africa**

While ACFID welcomes AusAID's intention to provide funding for a further five year program – Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) 2 – for Australian NGOs work in Africa, it appears that AusAID intends to maintain the program at the same level, in terms of the number of NGOs likely to be selected for funding – five to six NGOs have tentatively been discussed. Such a small number would be a fraction of the 39 organisations that are already working with partners in Africa, and may exclude medium sized organisations or those that are sectorally focused. This small figure stands in contrast to the substantially larger number of NGOs supporting development programs in Africa through community raised funds, and the potential to expand this further with increased government resourcing.

As APAC is the only substantial, dedicated funding for Australian NGOs working in Africa, and given it operates on a five year funding cycle, NGOs would like to see the number of organisations supported via APAC 2 increase significantly from 5- 6 to at least around 15-20. ACFID supports the proposed focus of APAC 2 on child health, maternal health, water and sanitation and food security but would like to see a clear and strong focus provided for work in the area of HIV and AIDS in Africa.

APAC 1 was the first AusAID NGO Cooperation Agreement, which provided funding to seven Australian NGOs to support development in seven countries in Southern and Eastern Africa. The \$60 million program (which covered the period from 2004 to June 2010) provided long term more flexible funding to Australian NGOs and their partners to implement programs addressing HIV and communicable diseases, livelihood and food security and water and sanitation. Australian NGOs commissioned independent evaluations of their programs in 2009 and a further AusAID review undertaken in August 2009 identified significant achievements and strengths of the programs. As the review noted:

*“APAC has achieved significant and lasting outcomes. The capacity of partners has been developed including in-country offices of the International NGO and local Civil Society Organisations (of various sizes) and district and local government. Partners report that they now have stronger internal systems (such as financial management and governance), stronger relationships with governments and communities, and are delivering better quality services to more people.*

*APAC has increased national partners' and community knowledge of HIV prevention, treatment and care; opportunities and means to enhance livelihoods; and the rights of women, children, and People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). Communities' attitudes have changed with reducing stereotyping of gender roles and more inclusive development. Examples of practice changes included establishing child-friendly environments in homes and schools; increasing realisation of women's inheritance rights; reduced stigma and discrimination against PLWHA; reduced domestic violence and community conflict; and many communities now planning and leading their own development and demanding services from government.*

*The program has contributed towards improvements in health through provision of water and sanitation, home based care, and adherence to Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART). Increased food security and enhanced nutrition have been achieved through introduction of small-scale irrigation, seed banks, food stores, solar dryers, and herbal gardens. Income security has been increased through income generation activities, village savings and loans, and support for increased crop and livestock production and diversification.”*

Review of Australian partnerships with African Communities, Final Report, 13 September 2009. Catherine Bennet, Jessica Kenway, Gilbert Kamanga, John Morley.

## **9. Scholarships**

It is noteworthy that the proposed increased official development assistance program to Africa will primarily be delivered through government and regional organisations and includes:

- a) a scholarship program providing one thousand scholarships negotiated with partner governments. This is in spite of the lack of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of scholarship programs, as noted by AusAID’s office of Development Effectiveness Annual Review, 2007), and
- b) a technical assistance facility providing assistance to governments.

ACFID has questions about the delivery organisations and forms of assistance, particularly the scholarship and technical assistance fund components proposed and funding for multilateral organisations. AusAID’s Annual Review of Development Effectiveness (ARDE) 2007 noted that “reliable information is not available on some significant non-country programs”, including funding to multilateral organisations and the Australian Development Scholarship Program. It noted that “to date no systematic approach has been taken to assessing post-award effects”, and cites a study undertaken for the scholarship program in Vietnam between 1998 and 2005 which found that nearly 25% of graduates from this period were either living overseas or were untraceable (pp 27-28).

There are many ways of building the capacity of partners besides offering sponsorship; for example, local training within the country. There are good courses at reputable universities in Africa, which would mean that learning was more appropriate for the local context. ACFID understands that a scoping study is to be undertaken on the proposed scholarship program and would welcome the Committee’s scrutiny of this in relation to Africa.

The Paris Declaration emphasises the importance of civil society’s participation in producing and implementing the development plans and strategies of partner countries. Bilateral assistance has a particular responsibility to promote supportive framework conditions and concrete involvement of civil society organisations. It is noteworthy that the Danish cooperation program has a civil society strategy that recognises the contribution of Danish CSOs and Danish cooperation with CSOs in developing countries as part of the Danish bilateral development cooperation. These aspects need to be considered in relation to the proposed new technical assistance facility and the scholarships program, both of which are understood to be directed towards government agencies and personnel.

### **Recommendation 7**

ACFID recommends that scholarships are focused on inter-Africa exchanges and African based educational opportunities, with a greater focus on retaining local and nationally educated citizens.

## 10. Technical Assistance and Funding to Multilaterals

AusAID's Annual Review of Development Effectiveness (ARDE) 2007 also raises questions about the effectiveness of technical assistance as a means of building capacity. It refers to a 2006 UK Department for International Development (DFID) evaluation of its technical assistance to economic management in sub-Saharan Africa, which found *"the overall impact on capacity development to date has been limited and significant concerns about sustainability remain"* (ARDE 2007, p 32).

The recent Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) review of AusAID noted: *"The value of technical assistance is much debated. Some argue that donors provide too much technical assistance, that technical advisers are too easily and often ignored, that capacity building is often an elusive goal, and that the provision of advisers can 'suck out' capacity, rather than build it."*

*"The OECD calculated that use of technical assistance grew from 37 per cent of Australian ODA in 1999 to 46 per cent in 2003. A recent AusAID survey suggests technical assistance spending remains at a similar level. Australia uses a high amount of technical assistance to deliver aid compared to other donors, at around twice the average proportion of technical assistance of other OECD countries."*<sup>14</sup>

An AusAID evaluation of technical assistance, cited in the ANAO report states: "many programs are unclear about how technical assistance can best contribute to capacity development". Technical assistance is still seen as the default position—the first solution to considered—although there is much questioning about alternatives.

### Recommendation 8

ACFID feels that simply providing technical expertise at a national level around the provision of services – whatever the sector - will not necessarily translate into changes at the community level. ACFID recommends not overly investing in technical assistance programs in Africa. Australian NGOs are well placed to deliver quality programs at this level and have a track record of success, working with the most vulnerable and with government and other agencies in many sectors including those highlighted as priorities by AusAID.

In addition, it is not clear how the current approach of directing the majority of AusAID funds through multilateral and bilateral organisations such as DFID (for example in Zimbabwe) is capitalising on achievements to date or building a distinct Australian identity. NGOs who have received funding from DFID recently in Zimbabwe are unaware that this funding came from AusAID.

### Recommendation 9

To increase Australia's direct contribution towards achieving the MDGs, and to promote the Australian identity of development programs, the new Australian Government Development Framework for Africa should prioritise increased engagement with, and support of Australian NGOs, rather than overly favouring channelling taxpayer funds through bilateral arrangements and multilateral institutions.

With the global financial crisis, it has become increasingly difficult for Australian NGOs to source funding from other bilateral and multilateral donors. Donor funds have been eroded resulting in the suspension of funding rounds to sustain current commitments. Therefore,

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<sup>14</sup> The Auditor - General Audit Report No.15 2009–10 Performance Audit, "AusAID's Management of the Expanding Australian Aid Program", pp.85-6

Australian NGOs propose that in the current financial climate, funding to bilateral donors such as DFID be reduced given DFID has significant resources beyond Australian support.

## 11. Priority Sectors & Approaches

### Recommendation 10

ACFID recommends that the Australian Government utilise the comparative advantage of Australian NGOs in the following proven approaches in Africa:

Table 4. ACFID Priority Sectors & Approaches

An effective approach at community level involves a multi-sectoral response, which addresses both practical and strategic needs of the women, men and children who are living in poverty and experience marginalisation and discrimination. This should encompass HIV prevention, care and mitigation of impact; support for sustainable livelihoods, rights of women, children and other marginalised groups (such as the poorest, people living with HIV and AIDS, youth etc); civil society strengthening, disaster risk reduction.
Sustainable Livelihoods including food security, Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change, emergency responses and protection.
HIV and AIDS prevention, care, mitigation and support (with a strong focus on youth), broader community health (including MCH) and technical and institutional capacity development of civil society.
Women and children's rights, gender equality, rights of other groups who are marginalised or have their rights violated through development, by strengthening engagement with civil society, promoting good governance, capacity building of duty bearers and protection of human rights and rights in national law.
Child survival, development, participation in decisions that affect them and child protection through capacity building of various stakeholders.

## 12. Specific Sectors

HEALTH, HIV & AIDS, AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS, WATER AND SANITATION

ACFID welcomes the significant increase to health expenditure in the 2009/10 Aid Budget, and recommends that Australia's engagement with the countries of Africa include partnership arrangements to strengthen and finance national health systems to improve the quality of life of Africa's people.<sup>15</sup>

HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa remains far higher than anywhere else in the world, and the absolute number of people living with HIV is still increasing. The HIV epidemic has a "long wave" effect, with significant impacts on population and household structures, ability of households to provide for themselves and effects on community structures and government capacity to provide basic services. As highlighted by the Report of the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2008), despite some modest successes, serious challenges still remain for Africa and a response to HIV/AIDS must be at the centre of development strategies.

<sup>15</sup> Please refer to the Recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group, June 2008 available via: [www.mdgafrica.org](http://www.mdgafrica.org).

AusAID has given HIV and AIDS prominence in previous Africa Strategies and Africa regional NGO funding mechanisms (APAC and the previous AusAID Africa NGO program). This invaluable support has shaped the programming and expertise of Australian NGOs and this significant investment should continue to be capitalised upon.

**Recommendation 11**

ACFID recommends retaining a distinct emphasis on HIV and AIDS in the forthcoming AusAID framework for Africa.

In relation to Water and Sanitation, ACFID emphasises the importance of a strong focus on sanitation and hygiene, as this is where significant problems lie. The sanitation MDG in sub-Saharan Africa is not likely to be met until next century; priority should be on improving services for those currently unserved such as in rural areas and informal urban settlements; the benefits of school sanitation facilities for girls and children with disabilities.

Preventable Blindness: Australian NGOs highlight documented evidence of a positive correlation between under-five mortality rates and childhood blindness in Africa<sup>16</sup>. Programs to address this are being implemented by Australian NGOs through their blindness prevention work.

**Recommendation 12**

In Africa, there are 33.2 million visually impaired people, of whom 8.1 million are legally blind<sup>17</sup>, mostly women and girls. As blindness prevention is a particularly cost-effective intervention that not only addresses health care gaps but also contributes to poverty alleviation, ACFID recommends that eye care interventions be considered as a health area that needs attention. This will build on the success of the Australian Blindness Initiative in the Asia and Pacific regions contribute to the disability agenda and will leverage leadership in this area.

GENDER

**Recommendation 13**

ACFID believes that there needs to be stronger focus on women's and girls' rights incorporated into the Australian Government's development approach.

MDG 3 on gender equality has important but narrowly defined targets. There are many other aspects relating to gender equality which impact on development across communities and countries in Africa. It would be appropriate for AusAID to include gender equality as a specific focus of the Africa Framework, recognising the significant gender disparities in the region and the effect of these on development benefits. This is in line with the recognition in AusAID's Annual Review of Development Effectiveness 2007 (page 34) that gender inequality stands in the way of just about every objective that faces the Australian aid program.

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<sup>16</sup> Gilbert, Anderton, Dandona, and Foster, 1999

<sup>17</sup> International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, 2009

## FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Africa is the only region in the world where per capita food production has fallen in the last thirty years.<sup>18</sup> Key reasons for this decline include multi-year persistent droughts, failures of seasonal rains, crop failure, livestock deaths and rising food prices. Drought frequency in the Horn of Africa, for example, is now believed to be three out of every four years; previously drought used to be roughly once a decade.

Some 23 million people across the Horn of Africa are threatened with severe hunger following consecutive years of drought, leaving them in need of emergency food aid. In a region where pastoralism and small-scale subsistence farming is the mainstay of the majority of the population, the impact of climate change has dramatic consequences.

ACFID welcomes Australia's support to African countries in their effort to enhance food security through the African Union and New Partnerships for African Development (NEPAD), as noted by the Foreign Minister in January 2009.<sup>19</sup>

Australian agricultural expertise in a range of climatic conditions puts Australia in a strong position to augment local expertise of farmers to face the growing food crisis by lifting agricultural productivity, raising farmers' incomes, and improving access to global markets (see section below on trade). The allocation of resources should be coordinated but largely provided directly to those organisations with the capacity to deliver services on the ground.

### **Recommendation 14**

ACFID recommends that Australia's bilateral relations and development assistance cooperation to Africa should increase its focus on adaptation to the impact of climate change.

## CHRONIC EMERGENCIES AND CONFLICT

While news of major humanitarian emergencies and spikes in conflict often dominate headlines, the plight of millions of people in Africa who have been displaced for years and sometimes decades, remains a low-profile but high-risk situation with serious humanitarian and security implications. The root causes of long-standing population displacement stem from the very states whose instability engenders chronic regional insecurity. Chronic emergency situations result from, and are perpetuated by a convergence of complex historical, socio-political and economic factors.<sup>20</sup>

Trapped in these perpetual situations, refugees cannot return home because of continuing violence or persecution, while facing significant restrictions on their rights in places of asylum. The UNHCR cautions that the situation raises political and security concerns among host governments and other states in the region. As such, protracted refugee situations represent a significant challenge both to human rights and security and should be a priority for Australia's engagement with the countries of Africa.

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<sup>18</sup> MDG Africa Steering Group "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa", Fact Sheet [www.mdgafrica.org](http://www.mdgafrica.org)

<sup>19</sup> Speech by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Stephen Smith MP, on 29 January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR counts at least 33 so-called "protracted or chronic refugee situations" involving groups of 25,000 people or more who have been in exile for over five years. According to UNHCR data, altogether they account for 5.7 million of the world's 15.2 million refugees

Australian NGOs are particularly concerned by the Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo camps in Dadaab Kenya, which comprise the largest single refugee site in the world. Reports suggest that many host communities are struggling to cope with the influx of people due to high food prices and persistent drought.

To date, Australia has no specific policy to address chronic emergencies or protracted situations. It is critical that Australia distinguishes the unique complexity that chronic emergencies bring, the emphasis on promoting regional stability and the specific skill-sets required to address entrenched issues. This acknowledgement should be defined separately from Australia's existing definitions of 'fragile states', which does not recognise regional issues and emphasises political solutions rather than specifically addressing urgent humanitarian need. The Government could develop a policy to better address chronic crises as part of AusAID's Humanitarian Action Plan and to leverage the Government's Chairing of the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator Donor Group. In addition, Australia should work with host governments and African civil society to contribute to international efforts towards the development of durable solutions to population displacement.

**Recommendation 15**

Develop a policy to better address chronic crises as part of AusAID's Humanitarian Action Plan and to leverage the Government's Chairing of the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator Donor Group.

PROTECTION

**Recommendation 16**

ACFID recommends that the Australian Government strengthen its resourcing and commitment to the protection of civilians in high-risk areas of Africa, including the Sudan. The partnership with the Asia Pacific Civil Military Centre of Excellence and the African Union — with support from the Australian Government, the NGO community, the United Nations and other International Organisations — in preparing Protection guidelines for peace support operations is one exemplar of partnership and commitment in this area. The momentum should not be lost and tangible efforts should continue to support protection mandates in peacekeeping missions and protection activities across humanitarian and development activities.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Make Poverty History campaign notes that in 1980, Africa had a 6% share of world trade<sup>21</sup>. By 2002, this had dropped to just 2 per cent despite the fact that Africa has 12 per cent of the world's population. As noted by the Foreign Minister, Australia and some countries of Africa have common interests, as agricultural producing countries, in bringing down protection levels.

This is particularly the case with regard to the tariffs and subsidies of rich countries such as the United States and Japan as well as the European Union, which inhibit African exports. Yet, it is important to recognise the elimination of tariffs and other trade barriers removes

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<sup>21</sup> "Fairer Trade", available at <http://www.makepovertyhistory.com.au/getdoc/ecbd4a07-5eb3-4923-9c4d-b40c07fb220c/Fairer-Trade.aspx>

important and powerful instruments of industrial and agricultural policy, which, in addition to protecting its infant industries, are often indispensable for improving the developing country's supply capacities in the long run.

With around 70 to 80 per cent of the world's poor working in the agricultural sector, ensuring there is fair trade in agriculture must also be recognised in the international trade agenda. Indeed, fairer trade is essential if we are to reduce poverty in the countries of Africa. Countries in Africa may need to protect their agricultural sector and associated population from the impact of unfair subsidies in rich countries.

**Recommendation 17**

ACFID recommends that the Australian Government contribute to international efforts towards

- a) Ensuring any multilateral trade agreement (emerging from renewed World Trade Organisation Doha Development Round negotiations) meets the human development needs of poor countries and delivers global economic growth that is equitable and sustainable;
- b) Maintaining pressure on rich countries such as the United States, Japan and also the European Union, to significantly reduce or eliminate agricultural subsidies;
- c) Acknowledge the limitations of certain developing countries in Africa to opening their agricultural markets in ways that undermine their food security, rural development and the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people.

**Annexure A: Australian ACFID NGO programs in the 39 countries of Africa**

**Annexure B: Selected Case Studies on ACFID NGO Approaches**