

Mr Bob McMullan MP
Shadow Minister for International Development Assistance
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

6 July 2007

Dear Mr McMullan,

I am writing to thank you for the announcement by Mr Kevin Rudd on Thursday July 5 which committed the Australian Labor Party to more aid and better aid.

Micah Challenge welcomes Mr Rudd's statement that a Labor Government would match the current Government's commitment to increase aid to 0.35% of Australia's national income (GNI) by 2010 and increase Australia's commitment to 0.5% by 2015.

We welcome Mr Rudd's emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals In his speech to the Lowy Institute and his recognition that that aid should not only be generous, it should be spent on poverty reduction.

Micah Challenge supporters, drawn from a wide range of Christian groups around the country, see global poverty as an issue of major importance and want to see initiatives that focus on long-term community development.

We therefore welcome the announcement's focus on the Millennium Development Goals. We note that you refer to 0.5% as the intermediate UN target and that the ALP will continue to aspire to 0.7%. One option which we would encourage Labor to consider is pegging your commitment to the MDGs at 0.54% by 2015 (the target established in the UN's 2005 Investing in Development report) and meeting non-MDG-based ODA commitments by moving to 0.7%. Ideally, we would urge the Labor Party to consider increasing its commitment to 0.7%, a target already agreed to by 16 of the 22 donor nations.

We thank the Labor Party for its emphasis on a consultative partnership approach with the governments and civil society groups, including churches, of developing countries in our region and believe that this approach will help to deliver not only economic benefits but will build stable and positive relationships in our region. The recent announcement about debt for development swaps with Indonesia is an example of this creative approach.

We know that Micah Challenge supporters who came to Canberra for *Voices for Justice* last month will be encouraged to see that their efforts along with the efforts of thousands of people involved in Make Poverty History have led to this very positive step towards meeting the 0.7% target. As you pointed out in your media release, Australians are generous in their personal giving to overseas aid and our government should be equally generous.

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Jackson

National Coordinator

On behalf of the Natinal Steering Committee.