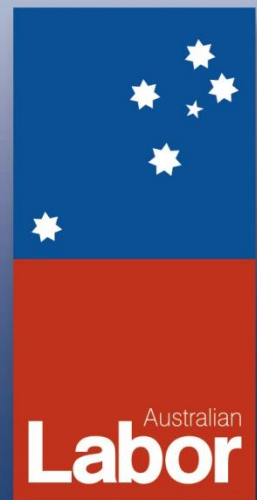


# A Good International Citizen: Australia's Development Assistance



**Julia Gillard and Labor**  
Let's move Australia forward



# A Good International Citizen: Australia's Development Assistance

**Stephen Smith MP**

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade



ELECTION 2010

## Table of Contents

A Good International Citizen:  
Australia's Development Assistance

<b>Overview</b>	<b>4</b>
What the Federal Labor Government has achieved so far	5
<b>Future Challenges</b>	<b>7</b>
Access to education	8
Better maternal health for women and children	9
Access to water and sanitation	10
Helping our neighbours adapt to climate change	11
Tackling avoidable blindness	12
Eliminating violence against women	13
Australian Volunteers	14
<b>The Coalition's Record</b>	<b>15</b>

## Overview

The Gillard Labor Government remains committed to increasing official development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015-16. This will result in a substantial increase in the aid budget going forward. In the 2010-11 Federal Budget, total Australian official development assistance (ODA) is forecast to increase to \$4.3 billion, up from \$3.8 billion in 2009-10.

Beyond 2015-16, as economic and fiscal conditions permit, Federal Labor will progressively increase Australia's official development assistance until we reach 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income.

Australians are a generous people. They help out those in need. But they also have every right to expect that our aid dollars are used wisely and have a real impact on the lives of those less fortunate. Significant progress has been made in reducing poverty since the international community committed to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, but there is much more work to be done.

Federal Labor has placed the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of Australia's aid program, directing more funds to education, health and other basic services.

We have made education a flagship of the aid program to give children in poorer countries a chance to go to school and improve their opportunity for a better life.

We have also refocused the program to improve the quality of Australia's aid and to make it more accountable.

Our record on international development assistance stands in stark contrast to that of the Coalition. Throughout the former Coalition Government's term of office, the Coalition's contribution to foreign aid averaged only 0.27 per cent of Gross National Income, and hit a low of 0.25 per cent.

Right now, the Coalition's policy on foreign aid is a \$300 million cut to the foreign aid budget, an action which seriously calls into question the Coalition's commitment to assist the world's poorest people.

Tony Abbott has not ruled out more savage cuts to foreign aid if he is elected as Prime Minister on 21 August.

At his campaign launch, Tony Abbott committed to the establishment of a "Debt Reduction Taskforce" with a commitment to identify further cuts to Australian Government expenditure, with no guarantees that foreign aid will be exempt from further cuts.

The Gillard Labor Government is committed to an aid program that is generous, effective and in Australia's national interest. Through the development assistance program, we can make a difference and improve the lives of millions, and it is our intention to do more.

## What the Federal Labor Government has achieved so far

Federal Labor has returned Australia to its place as a leader in international development.

Australia's aid levels are being progressively increased to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16. This commitment has been maintained in the face of significant budget pressure.

Under Federal Labor, Australia has re-established close ties to the United Nations and international agencies involved in aid and development.

We have increased funding to those United Nations and other agencies which share our priorities.

We are taking the lead on issues such as disaster preparedness and response, mine action and disability.

Federal Labor has placed poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the centre of the aid program, directing more funds to education, health and other basic services.

We have made education a flagship of the aid program to give children in poorer countries an opportunity to go to school and improve their chance of a better life.

Federal Labor's successes include:

- **Getting more children into school**, with thousands more children enrolled in school in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and delivering on a program to build or repair more than 2,000 junior secondary schools in Indonesia
- **Better health**, with at least \$250 million to improve women's and children's health including money to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation to improve immunisation in poor countries, preventing up to four million future maternal and child deaths, as well as support to countries such as PNG and the Pacific, Indonesia, East Timor and Cambodia
- **Clean drinking water and better sanitation** for people in East Asia, the Pacific, South Asia, Africa and the Middle East
- **Increasing funding to non-government organisations** to over 8.5 per cent of the aid program to support their work in developing countries
- Helping to combat **avoidable blindness** in the Pacific, PNG, Mekong countries and in Pakistan
- Establishing the **Australian Civilian Corps**, which will have a register of up to 500 trained civilian specialists who can be deployed to countries experiencing or emerging from disasters or conflict

- Assisting developing countries, especially the Pacific and other small island states, with practical measures to adapt to **climate change**
- Doubling the number of long and short-term **scholarships** for study in Australia between 2009 and 2015
- Supporting Indonesia to treat and prevent tuberculosis through **a debt for health swap**
- Signing 11 **Pacific Partnerships for Development** that commit Australia and Pacific Island countries to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and increase the beneficial impact of Australia's development assistance
- Better planning for and **responding rapidly to natural disasters** as they occur, including through the **Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction**.

### **Improving the effectiveness and the accountability of our aid**

Federal Labor has refocused the aid program to improve the quality of Australia's aid and make it more accountable:

- reforming AusAID by establishing it as an Executive Agency directly responsible to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, a Cabinet Minister, who has been assisted by a dedicated Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance
- implementing the recommendations of the December 2009 review of AusAID by the Australian National Audit Office
- undertaking a review of the use of technical advisers in the delivery of international development assistance, to ensure each position is effective and providing value for money.

## Future Challenges

Significant progress has been made in reducing poverty since the international community committed to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000.

The number of people living in extreme poverty is falling. By 2015 it is expected that 920 million people will be living under the international poverty line, half the number in 1990.

Forty million more children are now in school. Three million more children are surviving beyond their fifth birthday.

Despite this good progress, our children stand to inherit a world where the most vulnerable populations are at risk from a range of challenges – the impact of climate change, lack of access to clean water, natural disasters and conflict, and lack of access to basic medical care, particularly for women and children.

That is why Federal Labor will commit Australia to doing its fair share to tackle development challenges in the Asia Pacific and beyond.

Within our existing commitment to increase official development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015-16, the Gillard Labor Government will focus on key challenges.

## Access to education

Investment in education is one of the best forms of development. Education can transform the lives of individuals, families and societies.

An extra year of school can boost a girl's future earning capacity by as much as 25 per cent. Children with educated mothers are healthier and more likely to be educated themselves.

Significant progress is being made worldwide to get more children into school. Some developing countries are close to achieving universal primary education.

Yet more than 72 million children are missing out on an education. Rural children are twice as likely to be out of school as urban children. Disabled children are least likely to be in school.

In the Asia Pacific, a staggering 9.3 million children are not in school and 1.6 million adults lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. Of these, over 70 per cent are women.

The lost opportunity for education affects families' economic development, poverty reduction and health outcomes.

For these reasons, Federal Labor has made education a flagship of Australia's aid program.

Federal Labor has increased investment in education to over \$744 million in 2010-11, or approximately 19 per cent of the total Australian aid program, and we are committed to doing more.

The Gillard Labor Government will continue to give education the priority it requires.

As the Gillard Labor Government progressively increases Australia's aid levels to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16, we will maintain the priority that we give to education in the aid budget.

This will enable us to assist developing countries get more children into school and lift the standard of education by:

- reducing or abolishing school fees so that the poorest and most marginalised children can go to school
- supporting girls to enrol and complete primary school
- supporting disabled children to enrol and complete primary school
- improving the quality of learning through better trained teachers and learning materials
- improving school infrastructure, including water supply and sanitation
- investing in technical and vocational training and higher education to build skills locally.

## Better maternal health for women and children

The vast majority of stillbirths and newborn and infant deaths are preventable. Almost two thirds of the eight million infant deaths that occur each year are due primarily to poor maternal health, poor hygiene and deficiencies in maternal and newborn health services such as inefficient management of delivery services and lack of essential care for newborn babies.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 80 per cent of maternal deaths could be prevented or avoided through actions that are proven to be effective and affordable, even in resource-poor countries.

Maternal deaths in the Asia Pacific account for almost half of the global total. Maternal mortality is especially high in Laos, Cambodia, PNG, East Timor and Indonesia. In PNG maternal mortality has risen over the last decade to 733 deaths per 100,000 live births. In Australia, the figure is four per 100,000.

In 2009, the Federal Labor Government revised the Australian aid program's family planning guidelines to support the same range of family planning services for women in developing countries as are supported for women in Australia, subject to the national laws of the relevant nation concerned. At the same time Federal Labor increased funding for family planning activities.

Federal Labor believes that a greater effort is needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals to reduce maternal and child deaths by 2015.

The Gillard Labor Government will invest more to prevent infant deaths and ensure women do not needlessly die in childbirth.

As the Gillard Labor Government progressively increases Australia's aid levels to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16, we will also increase the priority that we give to child and maternal health within Australia's growing aid program.

We will work to improve child and maternal health, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region, by:

- increasing pregnant women's access to skilled birth attendants
- expanding the number and quality of health centres and aid posts so that women have the support and services they need for a safer delivery
- supporting greater access to emergency obstetric services
- funding research to combat common infections and complications arising in pregnancy and child birth.

## Access to clean water and sanitation

Globally, more than 8.8 million people lack access to safe water and 2.6 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation. In the Asia Pacific, 85 million people do not have access to adequate sources of drinking water and 183 million people do not have access to adequate sanitation.

As a consequence, 1.4 million children are expected to die this year from avoidable water-borne diseases.

Poor health resulting from lack of clean water and sanitation infrastructure undermines productivity, economic growth and stability.

Poor access means women and children spend hours each day walking to fetch and carry water. Poor sanitation at school means girls may miss out on education altogether.

In 2007, Federal Labor committed \$300 million to improve access to clean water and sanitation. This initiative has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

Within the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to progressively increase Australia's aid levels to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16, we will work to give more people access to clean water and adequate sanitation by:

- improving water supply and sanitation infrastructure in poor urban and rural areas
- promoting better hygiene to maximise the benefits of improved water and sanitation services
- supporting partnerships to strengthen water planning and management, enhance access to safe drinking water, increase water conservation and storage capacity
- enhancing sanitation and waste management to prevent the contamination of water.

## Helping our neighbours adapt to climate change

Federal Labor believes it is in Australia's national interest to take action on climate change.

Climate change is real and it represents a major challenge for Australia and for developing countries.

As part of Australia's commitment to the Copenhagen Accord, we pledged to support the most vulnerable developing countries, including our Pacific island neighbours, who are among the least responsible for the causes of climate change and will bear the brunt of its impact.

Australia, like other donors, is taking practical action to help developing countries adapt to the impact of climate change.

We also recognised that many developing countries with high or growing greenhouse gas emissions require targeted assistance to contribute to global emissions reductions.

In the 2010-11 budget, the Labor Government committed over \$350 million to climate change activities.

The Gillard Labor Government will ensure that Australia's contribution to developing countries to tackle climate change gives priority to the needs of the most vulnerable and meets our fair share of international efforts.

## Tackling avoidable blindness

Worldwide, approximately 400 million people live with blindness and low vision, and more than half of these people are in the Asia Pacific.

Two thirds of blind people are women and globally around half a million children become blind every year. Up to 60 per cent of children in low income countries die within two years of becoming blind.

As there are clear links between poverty and blindness, the elimination of avoidable blindness is an important step in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Up to 80 per cent of blindness or vision impairment is treatable or preventable, and interventions to improve or restore sight are among the most cost-effective of all public health programs.

A Gillard Labor Government will continue to advocate for increases in eye care funding from national governments.

In 2008, Federal Labor committed \$45 million over two years to tackle avoidable blindness. In our next term Federal Labor will do more.

This initiative has helped people in the Asia Pacific through targeted support for primary and secondary eye care needs, including expanding the number of eye health workers. For example, in 2009 Australia helped to provide eye surgery for over 1,300 people in East Timor.

Federal Labor will build on this success.

Within the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to progressively increase Australia's aid levels to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16, we will continue to work towards eliminating avoidable blindness and reducing the impact of vision loss in our region through:

- expanding eye care services, particularly in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific
- training eye health workers
- improving community awareness including through community eye health programs
- trialling a childhood blindness program for the Asia Pacific
- supporting policy development and implementation in eye health.

## Eliminating violence against women

Globally, around 30 per cent of women and girls experience physical or sexual violence during their lifetime, with much higher incidences in conflict zones.

This is a major problem in the Pacific where, in some countries, as many as two in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence.

Violence against women erodes progress in achieving all the Millennium Development Goals and the effectiveness of aid.

The economic, social, and health-related costs are substantial. Violence against women increases the cost of health care, social services, policing and the justice system, and results in loss of productivity from both paid and unpaid work.

Violence against women has significant human rights dimensions, causing trauma to women, families and communities.

Violence against women is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality and discrimination. The high incidence of violence against women, combined with the culture of fear generated by it, retards women's participation in political, social and economic life.

Within the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to progressively increase Australia's aid levels to reach 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015-16, we will work to increase the participation and protection of women and to tackle attitudes towards violence, particularly in Asia Pacific, by:

- funding civil society organisations and the United Nations to provide immediate support to affected women
- supporting existing proven education initiatives encourage our neighbours to improve services for women subjected to violence
- addressing women's vulnerability and violence in conflict and post-conflict situations to stop the recurrence of violence.

## **Australian Volunteers**

Australians are generous and give their time and money to help people less fortunate than themselves.

One of the ways Australians help is through volunteering.

Over the past five years more than 3,400 Australians have volunteered in 33 countries in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Federal Labor will expand and enhance Australia's overseas volunteer program.

The Gillard Labor Government will deliver a new, enhanced volunteers program, with up to 1,000 volunteer places each year in the Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, to enable Australians to share their skills and experience and to build people-to-people links.

## The Coalition's Record

The Coalition's dismal record on foreign aid speaks for itself.

In 1996, when the former Coalition Government first came to office, Australia was spending 0.34 per cent of Gross National Income on foreign aid. Throughout the former Coalition Government's term of office, the Coalition's contribution to foreign aid averaged only 0.27 per cent of Gross National Income, and hit a low of 0.25 per cent.

Right now, the Coalition's policy on foreign aid is a \$300 million cut in aid over the forward estimates, an action which seriously calls into question the Coalition's commitment to assist the world's poorest people.

Following the release by the Coalition of a list of planned spending cuts, Shadow Finance Minister Andrew Robb gave an explanation for the Coalition's \$300 million cut to overseas aid, telling Australians "we can't afford it":

**REPORTER:** Why have you decided to cut funding for poor countries to adapt to Climate Change and why wouldn't you be concerned about how that would impact on Australia's international reputation?

**ROBB:** Sure. **We can't afford it. A lot of these things have got merit, we can't afford it.** We've got to send a message not only to our own community but to others. (Press Conference, Parliament House, 19 May 2010)

It is not surprising that organisations with expertise in alleviating global poverty have responded with concern to the Opposition's proposed cut.

World Vision warned that "the Coalition's proposed cuts to the foreign aid budget calls into serious question its commitment to assist the world's poorest people" (World Vision, Media Release, 20 May 2010).

Oxfam called on Mr Abbott to explain "Does Mr Abbott plan to keep the promise he made to help the world's poorest?" (Oxfam, Media Release, 19 May 2010)

Now the Secretaries of Treasury and the Department of Finance have confirmed that the Coalition will strip \$300 million from the foreign aid budget over the next four years.

Tony Abbott has not ruled out more savage cuts to foreign aid if he is elected as Prime Minister on 21 August.

At his campaign launch, Tony Abbott committed to the establishment of a "Debt Reduction Taskforce" with a commitment to identify further cuts to Australian Government expenditure, with no guarantees that foreign aid will be exempt from further cuts.