



Campaign Statement

PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT FOR MICAH CHALLENGE

I am proud to lead a government committed to strengthening Australia's role in making poverty history and providing greater assistance to people in the world's poorest nations.

We are committed to an aid program that is generous, effective and in Australia's national interest.

Since coming to office three years ago, 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.

Through the development assistance program, we can make a difference and improve the lives of millions, and it is our intention to do more.

My 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, we 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.

As Prime Minister, I am committed to improving the quality of Australia's aid and to make it more accountable.

This year, the Government has reformed AusAID by establishing it as an Executive Agency directly responsible to our Foreign Minister, who has been

assisted by a dedicated Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance.

It is my intention that, as the value of Australia's aid programme continues to increase, there will continue to be a high level of Ministerial oversight of the aid portfolio.

Significant progress has been made in reducing poverty since the international community committed to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, but there is more work to be done – and we are committed to playing our role, in partnership with Australian development organisations, NGOs, churches and with our development partners around the world.

Micah Challenge and the Make Poverty History campaign have done an outstanding job in reminding us all of how we can make a difference in the lives of people who have so much less than us.

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