

September 2007



Statement from Micah Challenge Australia

To the Leaders of APEC,

Greetings and welcome to Australia. Meeting as leaders of the 21 “member economies” of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, you act as representatives of around 41% of the world’s population. A unique forum, APEC brings together some of the most wealthy countries in the world as well as developing countries, many of which face significant and emerging challenges for sustainable human development.

We urge that you measure the success of your deliberations and the effectiveness of policies you adopt by the benefit they bring to the poorest and most vulnerable within (and without) the borders of the 21 APEC countries. We believe that every APEC initiative should be assessed against this standard. Economic growth and free trade are not ends in themselves, but merely servants in the task of reducing poverty and achieving sustainable and equitable human development.

We ask you to be mindful of the commitments world leaders have already made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Your deliberations occur in one of the wealthiest cities of a region where 700 million people live in absolute poverty. We believe that now is the right time for APEC to advance its human security agenda, take stock of progress against these anti-poverty goals, and to work to remove the scandal of “abject and dehumanising” poverty.

At your meetings you will also consider climate change – a global human, economic, environmental and moral challenge. Our warming world can no longer afford to pay the price of our carbon-intensive industries, economies and lifestyles. We ask you to focus your discussions on the need to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance international cooperation through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Developed countries must take swift and significant action to reduce emissions. They must also share technology and resources to assist developing countries pursue “clean development” paths and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Developing countries must make every effort to pursue clean development and environmental sustainability. All must work to address the needs and rights of the poorest and most vulnerable as they are affected by climate change.

A major focus of APEC is on facilitating economic cooperation and trade liberalization. Fair, multilateral trade rules are needed if poor nations can grow their economies and we ask that you work to revive the Doha round of negotiations in the World Trade Organisation.

We greet you in the name of the one who “upholds the cause of the oppressed, and gives food to the hungry... and sustains the fatherless and the widow.”

Dr Les Fussell,

Chair of the Micah Challenge National Steering Committee, on behalf of over 90,000 Australians who support Micah Challenge