



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 2023 -2

Reinvesting in sustainable development for a safer world

ACFID AGM 2023

Preamble

At the halfway point in the 2030 Agenda, progress on more than 50% of the Sustainable Development Goals is minimal, and progress on 30% of the SDGs has either stalled or gone backwards. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and conflict are having a devastating impact on development globally. This has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, high inflation, and financing challenges for many governments. According to the United Nations, one in three countries is at high risk of being unable to finance their debt.

The Australian Council for International Development has welcomed the Australian Government's New International Development Policy. In particular, the sector welcomes the renewed commitment to the SDGs, and its explicit acknowledgement that sustainable development and lifting people out of poverty are required to achieve the policy's vision of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific. However, any policy is only as effective as the resourcing devoted to its implementation.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals call on developed nations to achieve ODA contributions of 0.70% of GNI and work to eliminate global extreme poverty by 2030. 22 of Australia's closest neighbours are developing nations, and the Oceania region suffers from the second highest rate of extreme poverty in the world, behind only Sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite increases in recent Federal Budgets, Australia's ODA as a percentage of GNI is currently at an all time low of 0.20%. This is estimated to decrease to 0.18% by 2026-27, and on current forecasts will decline further to 0.14% by 2034-2035. Australia is currently 27th out of 31 countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee rankings for aid generosity. Australia ranks lowest among its AUKUS, "Five Eyes" and Quad donor peers.

As a proportion of government spending, Australia has also never been less generous in its international development assistance. In the May 2023-24 Budget,

ODA comprised just 0.70% of government spending. Ten years ago, we gave double this. In the 1970s, we gave almost three times as much.

In 2010, there was bipartisan support for a 0.5 per cent ODA/GNI target. In 2019, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Indo-Pacific recommended the introduction of a legislated floor of 0.5 per cent of GNI funding. We note the recent resolution of the ALP National Conference to commit to "a plan and pathway" to achieve the target of 0.5% GNI for ODA.

Resolutions

At this critical moment in the trajectory of the 2030 Agenda, ACFID Council calls on the Government to:

- a) set out its plan and pathway to reach 0.5% GNI for ODA in the May 2024-25 Budget, including meeting the OECD DAC average of 0.36% by the end of a second term.

ACFID Council resolves to:

- a) Continue building bipartisan support for Australia's ODA budget, including by seeking commitments from all parties and independents for a development cooperation program that reflects our role in the world and the generosity of the Australian people who donate to many international development and humanitarian NGOs.
- b) Affirm that a clear plan for Australia to restore its international standing on development financing is critical to meeting urgent humanitarian and development needs, as well as Australia's pursuit of deep, meaningful partnerships in our region and beyond.
- c) In order to build and maintain the trust of the Australian taxpayer in the ODA, continue to work with the Federal Government in the pursuit of a more effective and transparent aid budget, as committed in the Government's new Aid Policy launched in August this year.

Proposed by: Mat Tinkler, Save the Children

Seconded by: Shane Nichols, Good Return

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