

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

2008 – A Call to Action on the Millennium Development Goals

World leaders have identified 2008 as a critical year for action to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In January, political and business leaders in Davos, Switzerland issued an *MDG Call to Action*, and the United Nations will hold a leaders summit in September.

Since the world adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, there has been much progress:

- 41 million more children are attending school
- 2 million lives are saved each year because of immunisation
- 3 million more children survive past their 5th birthday

However, the world still faces a development emergency, with:

- Over 500,000 women in developing countries dying each year in pregnancy and childbirth
- 1 billion people still living on less than USD1 per day
- 10 million children under the age of 5 still die from preventable and treatable causes

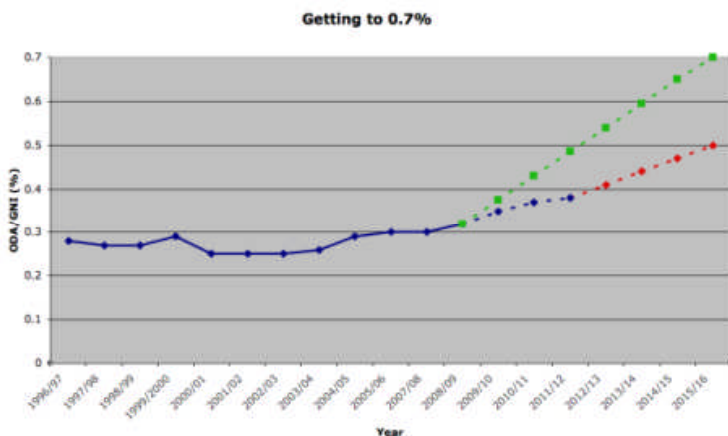
Without faster and broader progress, the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved by 2015.

Time For A New Commitment On Aid

Both sides of politics strongly support the Millennium Development Goals and Australia has just signed on to the *MDG Call to Action*. Aid increases begun by the previous Government since 2004, and new commitments by the current Government will lift aid to 0.5% GNI by 2015. Australians have demonstrated increasing levels of support for an effective and generous aid program, and hundreds of thousands have mobilised through the Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge campaigns.

Now is the moment to announce a timetable to increase our aid budget to the internationally-agreed target of 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2015. If Australia were to make this commitment we would meet our long-standing international obligation, contribute our fair share to the achievement of all the MDGs, and join the top ranks of developed country donors, rather than remaining at 17th of 22 donors as projected.

We have the resources. After 17 years of uninterrupted economic growth and at a time of record budget surpluses, Australia has never been better placed to scale up our efforts in the global fight against poverty.



MDG progress requires it. Aid investments made *now* will result in MDG progress by 2015. Leaving the bulk of our aid increase until after 2012 limits the contribution it can make to achieving the MDGs.

The world is ready. Aid donors and recipients have committed to better coordination and transparency in aid, and international aid efforts are better focused on agreed poverty reduction goals than ever before.

- = aid/GNI % 1996–2008
- - - = forward estimates 2009–12
- - - = required to reach 0.5% by 2015
- - - = achievable path to reach 0.7% GNI by 2015

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More needed to improve child and maternal health

This year around the world almost 10 million children under the age of five will die, largely of preventable causes and around 500,000 women will die from preventable and treatable complications in pregnancy or childbirth, and for every woman who dies another 20 will suffer injury or disability. The major infectious diseases – HIV, TB and malaria – will cause at least 4 million adult deaths globally.

Tragically, the world is failing in progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, to reduce maternal and child mortality. In our region – South East Asia and the Pacific – 14 of 22 developing countries are off-track to achieve MDG 4 (to reduce child mortality by two-thirds) and nine countries are off-track to achieve MDG 5 (to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters). In Cambodia, one in every 12 children dies before his or her 5th birthday, and the rate of maternal mortality in East Timor is 80 times that of Australia. We *can* help change this grim reality.



Australia has improved its international health assistance program in recent years. The 2008/9 Federal Budget also made some new commitments in health, including increases in funding for *HIV/AIDS*, fighting *avoidable blindness*, access to *water and sanitation*, and *extra support for UN agencies*.

However, we are still not contributing our fair share to the global effort to achieve the health MDGs. Australia must go further if we are to meet our commitments under the Millennium Development Goals to reduce child mortality by two-thirds, and to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters and to turn around the scourge of HIV and AIDS.

If Australia was to do its fair share we could save the lives of an estimated 75,000 children and 15,000 mothers every year.

To accelerate regional progress to ensure child and maternal survival and to stop the spread of AIDS, Australia should:

- Increase aid for basic health to \$1 billion per year by the 2010–11 budget (from around \$370 million this year).
- As part of this increase, contribute our fair share to effective international health bodies such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunisation, World Health Organisation, UNICEF and UNAIDS.
- Actively contribute to the International Health Partnership and other efforts to improve international health coordination and ensure adequate and predictable funding by donors and developing countries.

What We Ask You To Do

9 Pass on appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition, Brendan Nelson, and the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Senator Marise Payne, for their efforts to increase aid, and make new investments in basic education and health while in Government.

9 Call on the Government to invest more in maternal health and child health through the aid program in order to bring our spending on basic health to \$1 billion in 2010–11.

9 Call on the Government to announce how Australia will actively contribute to the International Health Partnership (that Australia joined in April) to improve international health coordination and adequate funding by donors and developing countries.

9 Contact the Opposition Leader, Shadow Treasurer, and Shadow Foreign Minister, seeking a timetabled commitment to lift Australia's aid budget to 0.7% GNI by 2015.

9 Continue to speak up in support of the Millennium Development Goals in Parliament and in public.