

JULY 20, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rudd's legacy for world's poor needs a new PM champion

Grassroots advocates from anti-poverty organisation RESULTS Australia today paid tribute to Kevin Rudd for his inspiring efforts to alleviate global poverty during his tenure as Prime Minister and call upon Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott to ensure Australia fulfills its commitment to achieve the United Nations' MDGs by 2015 regardless of who wins the 2010 federal election.

"Mr Rudd's commitment to realise the first goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from extreme poverty by 2015 – is to be commended," RESULTS National Manager, Maree Nutt said.

"RESULTS appreciated Mr Rudd's focus on education and microfinance and for pressing the government to increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.5 per cent of its gross national income (GNI) by 2015," she said.

RESULTS calls upon Prime Minister Gillard and Mr Abbott to further increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.7 per cent of the country's GNI by 2015 and to clearly state their party policies on Australia's Overseas Aid Program in the lead up to the election.

The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, an international financial institution that invests the world's money to save lives from these three diseases, is desperate for a massive funding injection by October. RESULTS is also calling for up to half a billion dollars from Australia in an effort to ensure the Global Fund can continue its vital work.

The replenishment of the Global Fund will be one of the new government's first tests, and the level of its generous contribution will show Australians just how committed it is towards international development.

Meanwhile, the World Bank, likewise an international financial institution that is working towards a world free of poverty, is seeking to maintain donor support at record levels of AUS\$48 billion. Australia must pursue reforms at the World Bank before committing to more high-level support.

After August 21, the new Prime Minister must also find room in the government's coffers to heavily invest in microfinance, made efficient by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Grameen Bank founder, Muhammad Yunus.

Australia's aid for microfinance still attracts less than half of one cent in every dollar of aid spent.

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