



MEDIA RELEASE

Ministerial snub to Bali Microcredit Summit meeting

Bob McMullan, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, will not join the President of Indonesia, the Honduran President, the former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus and other distinguished representatives of Asia and Pacific nations at the up-coming regional Microcredit Summit meeting in Bali.

The decision is a bitter disappointment to all Australians interested in peace and prosperity in our region. RESULTS Australia, a community group working for the eradication of poverty through proven tools such as microfinance, has decided to take action.

President of RESULTS, Amanda Satterly of Brisbane, said "our members, who are all volunteers, have decided not to let the government get away with this misguided decision. They have actively expressed their disappointment by visiting, calling and writing to both their local Members of Parliament and to Mr. McMullan himself".

Instead of Mr. McMullan, Australia will be represented at the Summit by an AusAID staff member. Ms Satterly stressed that the consternation caused by the decision was no reflection on AusAID, or the staff member, but rather reflected the concern that Mr. McMullan's non-attendance was a dangerous signal.

"As things now stand, people of Australia and governments of the region could interpret the Parliamentary Secretary's non-attendance as an indication of disinterest and insincerity in its commitment to poverty eradication in the region" Ms Satterly said.

"I am concerned that the AusAID staff member chosen to attend the Summit will not have the level of influence necessary to implement the significant policy change on microfinance alluded to by the Prime Minister in the run up to the last election", she added.

Ms Satterly called on Mr. McMullan to reconsider his decision.

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