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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anti-poverty group praises Rudd and throws down gauntlet to Gillard

RESULTS National Manager, Maree Nutt, today paid tribute to Mr Kevin Rudd for his inspiring efforts to alleviate global poverty during his tenure as prime minister and asks Australia's first female leader, Prime Minister Julia Gillard, to redouble the Government's efforts to ensure Australia fulfills its commitment to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

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

RESULTS International (Australia) is an international grassroots anti-poverty advocacy group whose purpose is to generate the public and political will to end poverty.

"RESULTS appreciated his 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 on Prime Minister Gillard to further increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.7 per cent of the country's GNI by 2015.

Gillard's vision on Australia's Overseas Aid Program will eventually become clearer in the lead up to the next federal election.

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

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 US\$42 billion. Australia must pursue reforms at the Bank before committing to more high-level support.

Prime Minister Gillard must also find room in the Government's coffers to heavily invest in microfinance, made popular 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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