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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Gillard Government needs to move forward on poverty

Grassroots advocates from anti-poverty organisation RESULTS today called on newly-elected Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Labor's recently appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd to up the ante on its commitment in the fight to end global poverty.

RESULTS has also laid down a fresh challenge for the new government to make sure it stays on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations – one of which is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from extreme poverty by 2015.

The United Nations is set to hold a special review summit on the MDGs in New York, starting September 20, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has asked all world leaders to attend so as to accelerate and reaffirm their countries commitment to the Goals. For the good of the Asia-Pacific region, it is essential that both Gillard and Rudd attend the Summit.

At the MDG Summit, Australia could demonstrate its commitment to achieving the MDGs by making a big increase to its support for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The Global Fund, created in 2002 to address these three killer diseases which coexist with extreme poverty, is an international financial institution that wisely invests the world's money to save lives that are affected from grave diseases. To date, it has committed US\$19 billion to programs across the world that has helped saved the lives of 5.7 million people.

Past Australian Governments have recognised the genuine effectiveness of the Global Fund, but none since have been contributing its fair share. In September, the Gillard Government will decide on its replenishment figure for 2011 – 2013, as the Global Fund goes through its Third Voluntary Replenishment phase.

"If Ms Gillard truly wants Australia to move forward, and not back, then we seriously need to invest more in the Global Fund, so that we are in a better position to achieve the MDGs before 2015," RESULTS National Manager, Maree Nutt said.

"Compared with most other countries, Australia is well placed to scale up its commitment to the Global Fund and our fair share of AUD\$500 million over the next three years is easily affordable within the planned growth of overall aid," Ms Nutt added.

Replenishing the Global Fund will be Gillard's first real test as prime minister, and the level of her generous contribution will show just how committed her new government will be towards international development.

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