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Micah Challenge calls for a greater Australian investment in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria

At a time when the Australian Government is being criticised at home and internationally for cutting its foreign aid budget, the Micah Challenge coalition calls on the Government to make a substantial new investment in saving lives by contributing to the Global Fund's effective and accountable work to combat three deadly diseases – AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Immediately following on from World AIDS Day on Sunday 1 December, the Global Fund will hold a conference to secure funding commitments for the period 2014–16.

“We are calling on our Government to contribute \$375 million towards the work of the Global Fund over the period 2014-16,” said Micah Challenge’s Political Engagement Coordinator Ben Thurley.

“This roughly represents Australia’s fair share of the Fund’s replenishment request and would make a vital contribution to saving lives around the world.”

By funding projects in over 140 countries the Global Fund currently enables more than 6 million HIV-positive people, including pregnant and nursing mothers, to receive Anti-Retroviral Treatment. The Fund has ensured that over 11 million people have been tested and treated for TB, as well as enabled the distribution of more than 360 million insecticide treated bed nets.

“All these efforts have saved millions of lives around the world,” said Mr Thurley.

“In fact, roughly half of deaths from infectious diseases around the world are caused by the three diseases the Global Fund was set up to fight: AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.”

Despite remarkable global progress against these diseases in recent years, the Micah Challenge coalition believes the poor can’t afford for us to ease our efforts.

“Neighbours in our region, including Papua New Guinea, and elsewhere are facing terrible burdens of ill-health and mortality because of AIDS and TB and we should seize the opportunity to make a big difference in this area. It’s the right thing to do and it’s in Australia’s interest to support healthy populations in our near neighbours,” said Mr Thurley.

For comment or interview, please contact:

Ben Thurley - Political Engagement Coordinator, Micah Challenge Australia

E: ben.thurley@micahchallenge.org.au | M: 0431 985 009

Micah Challenge is a global movement of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice in support of the Millennium Development Goals. In Australia, more than 50 aid and development agencies, as well as churches, schools, groups and individual Christians endorse the campaign. www.micahchallenge.org.au.