

MEDIA RELEASE

Launch of the Movement to End Poverty

In Canberra today up to 1000 young Australians gathered on the front lawns of Parliament House to launch the *Movement to End Poverty*, a joint campaign of the Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History coalitions that will run up until the Federal Election.

Young Australians representing every State and Territory in Australia stood with their politicians in a giant map of the nation, displaying electorate banners made to look like giant Google drop pins.

Viv Benjamin, 24 year-old CEO of the Oaktree Foundation, said that the young Australians attending were Ambassadors against global poverty.

“They have travelled throughout the nation as part of Oaktree’s Roadtrip to End Poverty, raising awareness about global poverty and the things Australia can do to help,” she said.

Make Poverty History youth spokesperson Jody Lightfoot said that the campaign aims to collect 500,000 signatures by the Federal Election.

“We are asking our nation’s leaders to ensure we give a fair share to help the poorest people overcome poverty,” he said, “just 50 cents in every \$100 of gross national income by 2016 and 70 cents in every \$100 by 2020. This is an achievable goal.”

John Beckett, National Coordinator of Micah Challenge, said that well-directed and effective aid is one of the keys to seeing an end to extreme poverty in our lifetimes.

“Since 1990 we have globally halved the number of people living under the extreme poverty line of less than US \$1.25 a day,” he said. “If countries such as ours step up and do our bit, we can eradicate extreme poverty in our lifetimes.”

Mr Beckett said the joint *Movement to End Poverty* petition will be a key tool used by Christian individuals, churches and agencies in Micah Challenge’s *Finish the Race* campaign over the next six months to demonstrate widespread support for a generous overseas aid budget.

Micah Challenge’s *Finish the Race* campaign aims to keep global poverty on the election agenda in September, and ensure Australia’s politicians remain committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals which seek to halve poverty by 2015.

John Beckett is available for interviews on behalf of Micah Challenge.

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The Movement to End Poverty is a joint action of the Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge Coalitions, for all Australians who believe we can end extreme poverty. For more information, go to www.movementtoendpoverty.org.au.