

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date of Issue: 9 May 2012

Government Breaks Promise to the World's Poor

Micah Challenge is deeply disappointed that the Labor Government has broken its promise to allocate 50 cents in every \$100 of national income to overseas aid by 2015, in order to save \$2.9 billion over the next four years.

Aid contributions will remain at 0.35% GNI in the coming fiscal year, and will reach 0.5% in 2016-17, a year later than promised.

"We are deeply disappointed that the government has reneged on its commitment to the 0.5% GNI target," said the Rev Paul Perini, Chairperson for Micah Challenge and Anglican Minister.

"Not only is it a broken promise, but it has real impact on people's lives. Keeping the promise in full and on time would have saved at least 800,000 lives in four years. By breaking the promise, we will be saving 250,000 fewer lives over that time."

The promise to increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.5% of GNI was made by the Labor Government before the 2007 election and reaffirmed in 2010. The commitment is also supported by the Opposition.

"However, information we received from AusAID officials suggested that cuts would have been much deeper without the sustained campaigning of concerned Australians in the budget lead up," said Mr Perini.

The government and AusAID have been working hard to make aid more transparent, accountable and effective, particularly through the Independent Aid Review and the newly announced Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework. The Framework will help determine where Australian aid will be spent over the next four years, what results will be achieved and how they will be measured.

"We know that aid works. Australian aid is on a solid footing to reduce poverty and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals," said DJ Konz, a member of Micah Challenge's National Steering Committee.

According to the UN, over the past 20 years about 14,000 lives a day have been saved by well-targeted government aid money from the world's wealthiest economies. This is a total of approximately 202 million people who are alive and contributing to their communities and economies.

"We are disappointed that the government has decided not to build on this work in the coming fiscal year to keep its promise to Australia and to the world's poor," said Mr Konz.

Micah Challenge calls upon Tony Abbott to ensure the 0.5% target is met by 2015 if the Coalition forms Government at the next election.

Micah Challenge is a global movement of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice in

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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. See www.micahchallenge.org.au.

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