

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC POLITICAL ADVOCACY COUNCIL

Submission to the inquiry into the link between Aid and Human Rights

Aim of Foreign Aid

The principal motivation for the overseas aid programs is based on humanitarian compassion. Moreover it is to help nations return to the path of sustainable development, prevent crisis from becoming more impacted and minimise the need for future ongoing humanitarian and disaster relief. Foreign Aid takes several forms: Bilateral Aid is from one government to another. Multilateral Aid is from an international institution such as the World Bank.

One fifth of the world's people still live in absolute poverty. Each day in the developing world over thousands children under five die mostly from preventable diseases and more a billion people are without access to clean water.

Unlike most other countries, we live in a developed part of our region, where our standard of living is much higher than the vast majority of our neighbours in the Asia and the Pacific. John Newark voiced his concern about aid's inefficiency:

In principle, a nation that borrows abroad does so on the assumption that borrowed resources will be invested wisely whether in education, road building or other activities. Productive capacity will be increased and investments will produce returns that will more than allow the interest on the loan to be paid. As nation after nation declared itself unable to meet its debt service obligations to donor community raised a fundamental question. What had gone wrong? Why had so much investments in so many countries failed to earn a sufficient return to allow the debt to be serviced on time? ¹

This is something which Australia should look at it very carefully. Thus we should always question our government aid programs if we discover that investment in certain countries failed to improve the plight of the developed countries.

John Newark said that the major donor agencies of the OCED (Organization of Economic Cooperation and development) have recently confirmed that they intend to give higher priority to supporting the efforts of developing countries that have demonstrated a strong commitment to democracy, participatory, good and efficient governance, and a respect for human rights². This is something Australia should lobby for and to take it into account when it assesses eligibilities of countries for aid grant.

Despite the existence of foreign aid, the less developed nations debt was increasing at a rate of 22 per cent per year over the 1980s. Thus the total debt was totalling to \$160 billion and thus a huge flow capital from the developing world to the developed world. John Newark said that donor community is no longer willing to turn a blind eye to inefficient wasteful or excessively corrupt regimes. In recent years for

example Japan currently the second largest donor has suspended aid to Myanmar, Zair, Haiti, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Guatemala because of human right violations³.

The aid program needs to promote patterns of growth which maximise sustainable poverty reduction. The priorities for aid programming should be promoting the basic prerequisites for broad based economic growth overcoming structural disadvantage and discrimination against the poor and increasing their productivity. Bilateral aid programs must be built around the needs and priorities of the individual reappoint countries.

Australia needs to limit the number of countries that it assists and develop a transparent and rigorous approach to graduating the more advanced developing countries from the aid program. The donor countries should limit the number of countries that are assisted and facilitate a sharper focus on a recipient countries needs. Decisions on which countries should receive Australian aid will inevitably be guided to some extent by broader national policy interests. Other criteria should be based on the objective of reducing poverty through sustainable development. The implementation of effective development strategies implies that countries will reach a point where the need for foreign aid diminishes and that aid will ultimately not be needed.

Human rights is important issue in international politics. Australia is lucky to be advocating human rights at international levels but the truth of matter that a lot is still to be done. It is a grave mistake for Australia to turn blind eyes for 25 years on the Indonesian annexation to East Timor.

Australia was known to have given logistical support and aid to the Indonesian army. For 25 years Indonesia abused human rights in East Timor and Australia failed to force Indonesian government to bring the culprits of Dili massacre to Justice. However at last Australia finally did the last thing and liberated East Timor. The lesson to learn is that Australia ought to formulate clear policies which link Aid and Human Rights.

Thus Australia ought to make it very clear to countries that there ought to adhere to the declaration UN declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Australia might be told to mind its own business owing to principle of non interference in internal politics of that countries. Human rights affect us all and its abuse will be obstacle of bringing justice in our modern world.

Gary Smith gives a clear definition of Human Rights:

Thus human rights sit uneasily between the domestic and international realms. As a descriptive term, "human rights" appears to be more closely aligned to the universalist principle, promoted by proponents of global community, that individuals should enjoy rights not because of their location

within a nation-state but because they are "human" ...To promote universal human rights as a durable feature of global politics, then, challenges the first principle of the extant interstate system: sovereignty⁴.

As we see above human rights ought to be dealt with despite the fact it conflicts with the notion of sovereignty of a nation which is the centre of human rights abuse. It was Australian external affair minister Dr Herbert Evatt who lobbied the UN to include domestic jurisdiction principle to maintain to force the notion of inviolable state sovereignty⁵. Therefore Australia has every right to link Human rights with Aids and to demand a given country seeking aid program to improve its human rights record.

In the information guide of the inquiry into the link between Aid and Human Rights, it says that Australia underpin six principles in its Australia aid program. However we believe that there ought to be two additional ones. The first one to make sure that aid grant are well audited and not be used for any other purpose. The other one to ensure that Human rights issues if any are being addressed.

We will analyse six key principles in Australia's aid program:

A focus on partnerships with developing countries

It is important to forge a good relationship with developing countries and render any help possible within Australian capability. Australia needs to help these countries to address their problems with human rights. Australia can do it diplomatically and it is of course wrong to directly say to developed countries, reform human rights or no aid. In politics it is good to develop good working tactics to ensure that countries are forced(diplomatically) to respect human rights principles and avoid any abuse. Nevertheless human right should always be linked to aid. If a country refuse to improve its human rights record then Australia may frankly says:"In Australia, a large section of people who elect government support human right conventions and if we do not address the abuse of human rights in your country, then our government might pay for it at next election and aid to you may be affected a great deal".

Responsiveness to urgent needs and development trends

It is normal that aid should address urgent needs for a particular country. There need to be a priority for which country and project ought to take place first. Tax payers money are ought to be spend wisely. It is wrong to find out later that some of aid money are diverted to buy say military equipment to purge dissent among its population who may be calling for a stop of human right abuse. Priority for development which enhances the standard living of the population and not improve government political stand.

A concentration on practical approaches to alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development

Australia's Aid program ought to focus primarily on financing programs which create prosperity for the deprived section of the population. Australia ought to make sure that aid ought to be available for sustainable development projects. For example factories might be opened, which will employ jobless people. Also to fund affordable housing for less worthy families. Also it is important to encourage Australian government to co-operate with private sector or big firms to undertake projects which will help third world countries improving their social and living standard.

Targeting through identification of clear priorities

It is very important before aid to be allocated overseas, that special foreign affairs assessors be sent to identify the steps needed to enhance affordable and good development projects. Thus detecting what the country really need of development and projects. Tax payers money ought to be spend wisely on reasonable projects which will benefit the community.

Reflection of Australian values abroad, and

Australian values ought to be promoted overseas, so the developed countries or aid recipients learn from Australian culture. Thus spreading tactics needed to create a justable and sustainable development for the benefit of the country. It is important that cultural and social exchange should takes place between Australia and the recipients countries and to emphasis that Australia would not buy countries with Aid money. Thus the idea will be to render any help Australia can offer.

Openness to new ideas and approaches

Australian aid policies ought to be reformed whenever it is possible as need arises. Australia aid program ought to have workable policies.

Foreign aid grant ought to audit and not to be used for any other non agreed means.

As we said before Australia foreign affair ought to include an additional seven principle. The reason that foreign aid money ought to be well audited and it is a must to ensure that government well spend tax payers money in a worthy purpose.

To ensure that human rights issues are being discussed if any

The donor country can diplomatically address the recipient countries about concerns of human rights abuse. It is important to imply that foreign investment would not pour in unstable political climate.

It is not good enough to just say that promotion of civil and political rights are vital for governance and sustainable development. Action is needed and not just talk.

We will discuss the foreign affairs framework for supporting human rights through the aid program consistent with the overall policy in the previous statement, including the following principles:

- **The high priority given to human rights, so that civil and political rights are ranked with economic, social, and cultural rights**

This is very good for the foreign affair to make sure that all aspects of human rights are being taken into account before deciding to aid certain country. The donor country has a right to make sure how its money is being spend well. Moreover to make sure that people living standard are improved .

- **Activities will continue to be undertaken that directly address specific rights.**

It is important that Australia makes sure that it should address specific rights issues of the aid recipient countries. The aid ought to be used to help the recipient countries to promote economic and social prosperity for the community. In order to receive an aid, recipient countries ought to prove that before they can manage aid money and projects, they ought to address human rights problems issues if any. They need to establish good political atmosphere so the donor countries will be satisfied that the money went for the right cause. It is not that we are buying recipient countries to improve their human rights record but to give them a message that we want help them to have a stable economic and political system. Aid will not encourages opposition of independence seekers to topple their leaders. It will be used simply to modernize the recipient countries economic system. It is important to note that people will be satisfied when they see their government improve its economic and social aspects of their country.

- **The emphasis is on the practical and achievable;**

The aid program should finance practical and achievable projects. In other words projects ought to be realistic and able to produce the desired outcome. It is important that foreign affair will not be accused of mismanagement of aid programs. Foreign affair ought to be accountable to the parliament and to the taxpayers. Sound policy analysts ought to ensure that aid program are well set up and succeeded in achieving its objective. These days it is hard to waste one dollar of taxpayers money. The government ought to learn from its mistakes and not repeat them again especially in the budget management.

- **Activities will be developed primarily through consultation with partner countries on human rights initiatives;**

Australia ought to continue lobbying its partners and aid recipients to ensure that human rights are respected. This is a condition for the success of any sustainable social development. Donor countries will invest their money in a

stable political country and not otherwise. It is still taking major investors 10 years to invest in Lebanon after the end of the civil war. The recipient countries should understand that the criteria of giving aid depend on their political system stability. I believe that this will not contradict UN human right regulation concerning human rights and sovereignty of the recipient countries. I believe that Australia ought to lobby for a more updated declaration on the right to development. I also suggest that countries that abuse human rights ought to be sacked from UN membership. This will ensure that they will adhere to international treaties concerning observing human rights.

- **‘Considerable care’ will continue to be applied to the use of aid sanctions associated with human rights concerns, and**

I hope that foreign affairs really reinforce the principle of aid sanctions to countries, which refuse to correct its human rights abuse record. However Australia failed to sanction Indonesia for 25 years during its occupation of East Timor. It is a controversy and we hope it will not happen again. Thus Australia should not support tyrant systems and help them to survive. Enough is enough and aid program is aimed to improve living standard of the people not their governments.

- **The Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAid) will continue to link closely with other government arms on governance and human rights issues.**

We heard before in the last decade of problems with AUSAID and we hope that it will become totally problem free. Also it ought to be non-partisan. AUSAID ought to be reformed and injected with a new blood directors and staff. Also it ought to be accountable not just to the government and parliament but also to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. We also propose the establishment of a public sub-committee which will consist of prominent public figures to ensure that AUSAID is well run. AUSAID ought to advise foreign affairs on the true situation of the recipient countries. AUSAID should manage the funds properly.

Activities

It is important to assess the timeliness and effectiveness of the bilateral aid programs. Also to make sure that regional cooperation programs are well timed and being well managed either by Australia or by other nations or multilateral bodies in the Asia Pacific region. Australia should be a leader in promoting regional development in association with addressing human rights issues if any.

It is very hard to assess the effectiveness of global and multilateral aid programs. However with the assistance of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Australia will be able to increase the probability of the success of any multilateral

aids programs. It is important to learn lessons from the Asian financial crisis in 1996 and from the mistakes of past practices of bodies such as World Bank and IMF.

It is true that emergency and humanitarian aid from the international community can make difference between live and deaths for individuals and for whole communities. Foreign affair ought to formulate clear policies regarding regional development cooperation programs. Also Australia ought to explain to IMF and World Bank that the Asian world is still suspicious of the means of their operation in the region. Australia ought to be a mediator and to ensure that International institutions are far from reviving colonism. Also large countries such as United States and England ought not to use the international institutions as means of strengthening their political dominance in the world.

Here we call for an independent Australian foreign policy from United States. Especially in promoting regional developing cooperation programs. Also I would like Australia to rapidly solve the issue of sharing oil fields with East Timor. We believe that Australia ought not to be seen that it defends East Timor for its economic interests as US did in the Gulf. East Timor deserves to manage its affair away from foreign interference. Australia should cooperate with East Timor and I believe that East Timor will not turn its back on Australia. I hope the Parliament has a closer look at this issue because it can harm Australia global reputation as peace maker .

Utility of aid instruments

It is important that the aim of the aid program, is to improve the lot of local communities in developing countries through projects aids. It is important to use aid program as a chance to promote human rights principles. It is a power in the hand of Australia to discuss human rights alongside discussing aid programs. It is important for Australian foreign affair not to abuse this and try to enforce Australia political will on others in exchange of aid. I know this will not take place and we should ensure that Australia deal diplomatically with the recipient countries and to respect their point of view.

Australia ought to amnesty poor developing countries of their debts and persuade the world community to do the same thing. Australia ought to establish institute for human rights which will advice government on best ways to ensure that human rights principles are being promoted in the foreign affair policy. It is good that Australia remains contributing to Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human rights institutions and the centre for the democratic Institutions(CDI). Also CDI ought to be working with the UN commissioner for human rights. The current human rights commissioner Ms Mary Robinson is doing a good job in promoting human rights issue. However we should not deny that her work sometimes get restricted by political pressure from major countries.

The activities which Australia should take to advance Human right.

Bilateral country programs

Australian foreign affair should promote bilateral country programs. Forging good relations with recipient countries is so important. Thus Australia should use this situation to promote enhancing protection of Human Rights.

Regional programs in Asia and the Pacific

Australia has a duty to promote right of development and protection of Human Rights in Asia pacific region. This an area that witnesses some human rights abuses. For example house arrest of Burmese opposition leader , Indonesia purge of independence seekers in Ishak province , prosecution of former finance minister in Malaysia and Tibet in China. In addition with other human right abuse in other Asia pacific countries.

Global and multilateral programs, including the role of multilateral development banks and emergency and humanitarian assistance.

Australia ought to undertake global and multilateral program with the assistance with world economic institutions such as IMF and the World Bank. There is a need for an immediate global effort to eradicate poverty and help developed countries to make sustainable development. Australia ought to lobby to reform IMF and world Banks to make easy for developed nations to borrow loans. Caroline Thomas said that IMF was established as part of international capitalist system. Thus she said that it is reflected in the purposes set out in the articles of agreement of the IMF ⁶.

For example IMF imposes conditions on the borrowing nations to repay the loan and undertake drastic economic reform in their society. Bartram Brown said that it would be quiet unrealistic to expect international organization such as the IMF and the World Bank to be non political. Their budgetary resources as well as the fact that they owe their existence to the desire of states to cooperate ensure that there must be some political side to their activities ⁷. We desire that Australia lobby for IMF and World Bank to be free of political influence and not to be used as political weapons. It is true that IMF and World Bank should impose conditional terms on loans and demand certain action by donor countries. Nevertheless we need to ensure that any loan to be free from political tone.

The utility of differing aid instruments and channels for advancing human rights, such as:

- **Project aid, for example for schools, hospitals and basic infrastructure;**

Australia aid programs should be in form of project aid. For example aid programs should focus on helping developed nations to build schools, hospitals.

Also encouraging multinational firms to invest in those countries and to create sustainable social development. Moreover training government officials on drafting best social and economic policy, which will eradicate poverty and improve the living standard of the population. We believe allocating aid programs money directly by the donor countries is a way to go but with consultation of local government.

Micro credit, particularly through institutions such as the Grameen and Women's Bank, as a means of advancing the human rights of women

It is important for Australia to keep supporting institutions such as the Grameen and Woman's bank for the sake of promotion of human rights of woman. Moreover Australia should lobby for the creation of Global Bank devoted to help eradicate poverty and nothing else. Also the proposed Global Bank should prohibit nation with current human rights abuse record.

Debt reduction of Heavily indebted Poor Countries (HIPCS); and

Australia should reduce debt of heavily indebted Poor countries and lobby other nations to do the same. We heard for example intention of UK government to exempt debt for some countries. However a lot still to be done. Rich countries ought to help less fortunate one owing to the fact that world is becoming one global village. Moreover a stable global village will enhance peace and security and improve the social infrastructure of developed countries.

Activities supported under the Human Rights program, including small activities, the Asia-Pacific Forum, the centre for Democratic Institutions and the UN commissioner for Human Rights.

Australia should increase its lobbying for implementation of human rights programs at the Asia -Pacific Forum , the centre for Democratic Institutions and the UN commissioner for Human Rights. Also new convention for human rights ought to takes place to discuss this volatile issue.

Australia desired response to the UN declaration on the right to Development of 4 December 1986

Article 1

Australia aid program should takes into account that people have the right to self determination and right to full sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources. When a grant is given, receipient government should understand that their people have right to benefit from such aid. Also any human right abuse should be addressed before an aid program can takes place. The reason for this is simply donor countries should ensure that aid recipient countries could be trusted of using aid money. Thus countries with human abuse record are not worthy to manage properly aid programs.

Article 2

Australia should ensure that recipient countries undertake projects, which benefit all sections of their community. This is owing to the fact that UN article 2 of declaration on the right to development lobby for this to take place. Thus it says that states have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well being of the entire population and of all individuals. It is essential that if recipient are unable to adhere to this principle then Australia give aid until it will be clear that there will be fair distribution benefits resulting from aid programs.

Article 3

Australia ought to be involved in promotion of aid program according to article 3 of declaration on the right to development which imply that states have the primary responsibility for the creation of national and international conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development. Australia ought to create a good atmosphere to promote the right of development through lobbying institutions which Australia is part of it.

Donor countries can discuss human rights abuse with the recipient countries. Due to the fact that states have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. Therefore human rights issues can became obstacles and therefore the two ought to eliminate those abuses in order for co-operation to take place.

Article 4

According to article 4 Australia has an option of involving in bilateral country programs or regional programs in Asia and the Pacific. Where it says that States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development.

Australia should sustain in its action to promote more rapid developing countries.

Article 5

Australia has a duty to link human rights with aid and demands that human rights are to be respected. Also states shall take resolute steps to eliminate the massive and flagrant violations of human rights of people. Therefore Australia has legal right to address human rights issues with the recipient countries.

Article 6

Australia should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In other word aid program should not take place if there is abuse of any of human rights aspects.

Article 7

Australia should promote the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security. Also it should promote disarmament. Also complete disarmament ensures that resources released by effective disarmament measure are used for comprehensive development in particular that of the developing countries. It is not good to support a country with aid program at a time it spend a lot of its budget on disarmament. Australia should lobby to eradicate disarmament especially the poor one which accept aid program. It is important that aid money not to be used to fund disarmament by the recipient countries.

Article 8

Australia should make sure that recipient provide access to its people access to basic resources, education and the fair distribution of income. According to this article there have to be measures to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Australia should lobby their countries to promote the role of women in the recipient countries. Aid program should be used to eradicate all social injustices through social economic projects.

Article 9

Australia should adhere very closely to the declaration on the right to development.

Article 10

Australia should take necessary steps to formulate sound policies to enhance social development.

The future of Human rights and Aid

Australia foreign policy ought to be very clear and objective. As we said above the government ought to establish public sub-committee to help the joint standing committee on foreign affair in making sound policies concerning aid program. Australians ought to be briefed from time to time through public consultation about Australian aid program. Foreign aid grant is purely tax payers money and they should know how their money are spend. Also AUSAID ought to be reformed and be more accountable. Australia should also make sure that it addresses the local social problems of their subjects before looking into helping others. What we mean here is that foreign affair ought to liase with other ministries to ensure that Australian social welfare is not affected by aid programs. Australia first priority for its subjects such creating jobs for the unemployed and to create more socials sustainable programs. For example government ought to improve the welfare of minority and Aborigines. Aborigines living standard and rights ought to be addressed. What we are saying here is the truth. Since it is ridiculous to be seen as foreign aid provider while a section of community is protesting bad treatment by that government. An Aboriginal may say Australia is spending million of dollars and aids and nothing was done to

fund major social sustainable projects for the Aboriginals. It is true that government fund a lot of Aboriginals organizations. However we like to see government is directly involve in worthwhile projects, which will please Aboriginal population. All section of population should enjoy the prosperity of our economic. Australian Public political advocacy council will soon draft social policies to ensure that Aboriginal social standard and rights are being addressed and worked on. We are ready to address your joint committee and render any help for the sake of a fair foreign affair policy concerning the linkage between Aid and Human rights.

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Yours sincerely

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