



The Hon Richard Marles MP  
Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Treaties tabled on 14 May 2013 – Food Assistance Convention 2012**

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear before it on 17 June 2013. The departments provide the following information as requested by the Committee and can provide further information upon request.

**Responses to questions raised by the Committee in Hearing of 17 June 2013**

1. *Do Canada and the US now provide cash, as we do, or do they actually provide food?*

Canada and the US have traditionally provided a mix of commodities and cash.

2. *Have they (New Zealand and Britain) signalled that they will (ratify the new Convention)?*

New Zealand will not ratify as it is not a party to the new Food Assistance Convention. (New Zealand was not a party to the earlier Food Aid Convention.)

The United Kingdom has ratified. It is included under the European Union umbrella. The EU became a signatory on 1 August 2012 and approved the treaty on 28 November 2012.

3. *How many of the top ten nations tendering to supply food aid are also members of International Labour Organization Convention No. 129: Convention concerning Labour Inspection in Agriculture (Geneva, 25 June 1969) and are essentially subject to the same "international labour standards" as Australia?*

The top ten countries tendering to supply food aid are India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Italy, Belgium, France, Ethiopia, South Africa and the Russian Federation. Like Australia, these nations also have an obligation under the International Labour Organisation (ILO) 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to respect, to promote and to realise, in good faith, the fundamental principles and rights at work embodied in eight Conventions known as the 'fundamental' Conventions. This obligation applies to all ILO member States.

With the exception of India, all of the top ten countries tendering to supply food aid have ratified all eight fundamental Conventions and therefore have equal obligations under international law concerning core labour rights. The eight fundamental ILO Conventions are:

- *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)*
- *Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)*
- *Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)*
- *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1967 (No. 105)*
- *Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)*

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- *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999* (No. 182)
  - *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951* (No. 100)
  - *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958* (No. 111)

India has only ratified four of the fundamental Conventions:

- *Forced Labour Convention, 1930* (No. 29)
- *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1967* (No. 105)
- *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951* (No. 100)
- *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958* (No. 111)

The ILO *Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969* (Convention 129) is one of four priority Conventions which were identified under the *2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2008. Of the top ten countries tendering to supply food aid, France, Italy and Belgium have ratified Convention 129. As at June 2013, 52 ILO Member States have ratified Convention 129:

- |                                      |                        |   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| - Albania                            | - France               | - Poland  |
| - Argentina                          | - Germany              | - Portugal  |
| - Azerbaijan                         | - Guatemala            | - Romania   |
| - Belgium                            | - Guyana               | - Saint Vincent and the<br>Grenadines             |
| - Bolivia, Plurinational<br>State of | - Hungary              | - Serbia  |
| - Bosnia and<br>Herzegovina          | - Iceland              | - Slovakia  |
| - Burkina Faso                       | - Italy                | - Slovenia  |
| - Columbia                           | - Kazakhstan           | - Spain   |
| - Costa Rica                         | - Kenya                | - Sweden  |
| - Croatia                            | - Latvia               | - Syrian Arab Republic                            |
| - Czech Republic                     | - Luxembourg           | - The former Yugoslav<br>Republic of<br>Macedonia |
| - Cote d'Ivoire                      | - Madagascar           | - Togo  |
| - Denmark                            | - Malawi               | - Ukraine   |
| - Egypt                              | - Malta                | - Uruguay   |
| - El Salvador                        | - Moldova, Republic of | - Zimbabwe  |
| - Estonia                            | - Montenegro           |   |
| - Fiji                               | - Morocco              |   |
| - Finland                            | - Netherlands          |   |
|                                      | - Norway               |   |
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**Background**

The table below details, as at 20 June 2013, the members of the new Food Assistance Convention and their new commitments:

To meet the objectives of this Convention, each Party agrees to make an annual commitment of food assistance, set in accordance with its laws and regulations. Each Party's commitment is referred to as its "minimum annual commitment" and those confirmed to date are:

Donor	Commitment
Austria	€1.495m.
Canada	C\$250m.
Denmark	DKK185m.
European Union	€200m.
Finland	€6m.
Japan	JPY10bn.
Switzerland	CHF34m.
United States of America	\$1.6bn.

I trust this information is of assistance. I can be contacted on (02) 6272 3270 or via email at [Jo.Evans@daff.gov.au](mailto:Jo.Evans@daff.gov.au) should the Committee require any further information.

Yours sincerely

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