

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Senate Budget Estimates, June 2011
Questions on Notice: AusAID

Question No.53

Senator Xenophon asked in writing

- a) I understand that the Australian Government received that report of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness on 29 April 2011. When will the Government release the findings?
- b) Depending on the findings of the review, would AusAid consider initiating a separate humanitarian assistance review similar to the review recently completed by the UK's Department of International Development?
- c) With higher numbers of more complex emergencies and the number frequent rapid on-set disasters expected to double over the next ten years, would the initiation of a separate review be timely?
- d) Can AusAid provide information on what policy processes are used to determine the allocation of its Humanitarian and Emergency Response program funding?
- e) For example, what overarching policy process underpins Australia's on-going support to "forgotten emergencies", where needs remain acute despite public attention waning?

Answer:

- a) The Government released the Review and a formal response to its recommendations on 6 July 2011.
- b) The Government will undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of multilateral partners in 2011 (the Australian Multilateral Assessment) to ensure our objectives are aligned, and that we are working together as best we can to achieve results on the ground. Key humanitarian partners will be assessed as part of this review.
- c) AusAID is in the process of developing a new Humanitarian Action Policy to ensure Australia's efforts to respond to more frequent natural disasters and complex emergencies are appropriate, timely and effective.
- d) When a crisis overseas triggers an emergency response, AusAID acts quickly to determine the most effective approach to enable a rapid and timely response, in accordance with the framework established in the existing (2005) AusAID Humanitarian Action Policy. AusAID is in the process of revising this Policy. However, the fundamental principles which underpin the allocation of Humanitarian and Emergency Response program funding, and which are outlined in the existing Policy, remain valid.

Australia's humanitarian action is focussed on the Asia-Pacific region. In recognition of our broadening geographic interests in Africa and Latin America/Caribbean, Australia also supports a set of important international

partnerships which help us to meet our global responsibilities. The allocation of AusAID funds is determined by (i) the scale of the disaster or crisis; (ii) the responses of other donors in close coordination with the capacity of the affected country; and (iii) Australia's capacity to assist and make an effective contribution.

AusAID funding support for humanitarian emergencies is underpinned by the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD). The GHD framework, supported by donors, guides official humanitarian aid, and encourages greater donor accountability. Australia demonstrates our commitment to GHD principles, such as by providing un-earmarked funding to UN humanitarian agencies, and channelling funding through common humanitarian appeals during an emergency response.

- e) Australia monitors the impact and trajectory of protracted crises and ongoing emergencies through regular dialogue with trusted international humanitarian partners. For example, we meet regularly with the ICRC and the major United Nations humanitarian organisations (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme and the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF) and have regular policy discussions with the Australian Council for International Development's Humanitarian Reference Group.

Australia also cooperates with the international community to alleviate the suffering of people affected by "forgotten emergencies" and protracted humanitarian situations. Australia supports international and regional partnerships to extend the reach and impact of Australian humanitarian assistance. For example Australia is one of the top contributors to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) which provides for both rapid funding of rapid onset humanitarian emergencies and the topping up of under-funded humanitarian responses based on humanitarian need.