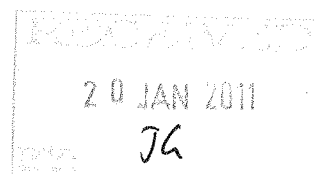


THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP


MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
CANBERRA

Mr John Murphy MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

24 DEC 2010



December 2010

Dear Mr Murphy 

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2010 referring a petition, submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions, regarding Australia's foreign aid expenditure. In accordance with Standing Order 209(b), my response is as follows.

The Australian aid program aims to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interests. The Australian aid program has doubled in size over the last five years to an estimated \$4.3 billion in 2010-11 and, on current economic projections, will double again to meet the Government's commitment to increase Australia's aid to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) by 2015-16. Beyond 2015-16, as economic and fiscal conditions permit, the Government will progressively increase Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) until we reach 0.7 per cent of GNI.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are central to Australia's aid program and focus attention on global development priorities. During the MDG Summit in New York in September, I made a number of commitments to accelerate progress to achieving the MDGs. Between now and 2015, Australia is likely to provide around \$1.6 billion for women's and children's health, \$5 billion for education and \$1.8 billion for food security.

Gender equity is integral for economic and human development. In addition to women's health and education initiatives, Australia's approach to achieving gender equity in developing countries includes promoting human rights, participation and leadership in decision making and access to economic resources. For example, in Nepal Australia has helped 5,288 women to set up businesses through the United Nations Development Program's Microenterprise Development Program. This in turn has led to the employment of an additional 5,426 female workers.

I note the petitioners' request for increased development assistance to address climate change. Climate change presents a global challenge for developing countries and has the potential to reverse progress towards achieving the MDGs. Between 2010 and 2012, the Government will contribute \$599 million to assist developing countries respond to climate change. At least 25 per cent of these funds will be directed to small island developing states, including our Pacific neighbours.

Thank you for notifying me of this petition. I trust that this information will be of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd