
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

The Link between Aid and Human Rights

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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Terms of reference

To inquire and report on Australia's efforts in advancing human rights in developing nations through the use of foreign aid, and in particular:

1. activities which have the advancing of human rights as their objective, in:
 - bilateral country programs;
 - regional programs in Asia and the Pacific;
 - global and multilateral programs, including the role of multilateral development banks and emergency and humanitarian assistance;
2. the utility of differing aid instruments and channels for advancing human rights, such as:
 - project aid, for example for schools, hospitals and basic infrastructure;
 - microcredit, particularly through institutions such as the Grameen and Women's Bank, as a means of advancing the human rights of women;
 - debt reduction of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCS); and
3. 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.

Referred by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 14 September 2000.



Abbreviations

ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFAO	Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
AI	Amnesty International Australia
ALRI	Australian Legal Resources International
ALWS	Australian Lutheran World Service
APF	Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
APHEDA	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad Inc
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CDI	Centre for Democratic Institutions
COHRE	Centre on Housing on Housing Rights and Evictions
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DFAT	(Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DSE	Development Service Exchange
GNP	Gross National Product

HIPCs	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HREOC	(Australian) Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HRF	Human Rights Fund
HRP	Human Rights Program
HRSGS	Human Rights Small Grants Scheme
HRTC	China-Australia Human Rights Technical Cooperation
Hurist	Human Rights Strengthening Project
ICCPR	<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)</i>
ICESCR	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)</i>
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
Komnas HAM	Indonesian Human Rights Commission
MDBs	Multilateral development banks
MED	Microenterprise development
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
NGDOs	Non-government development agencies
NGO	Non-government organisation
ODA	Overseas development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OI	Opportunity International Australia
Oxfam	Oxfam Community Aid Abroad Australia

PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RA	Radio Australia
SAA	The Salvation Army
TI	Transparency International Australia
UDHR	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</i>
UN	United Nations
UNAA	United Nations Association of Australia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCA	Vietnamese Community in Australia



Conclusions

The Committee concluded that:

AusAID should make additional efforts to ensure that its documentation is complete and easily available to those who are interested in its work (paragraph 3.92);

there is merit in AusAID convening a program of seminars with Australian non-government organisations to discuss subjects of common interest, including specific linkages between aid and human rights (paragraph 3.96);

the Australian Government should give serious consideration to the cancellation of the debts of other heavily indebted nations (paragraph 4.40), and

the Australian Government could take the lead in convening an international conference on the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. Such a conference should review the process of admission to that initiative, so that acquisition of the status actually improves economic and social conditions in those countries (paragraph 4.41).

The Committee notes the support that AusAID is giving to the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the Centre for Democratic Institutions and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, if it is not possible to increase the allocations to these bodies in the future, encourages AusAID to continue the current levels of assistance (paragraph 5.66).

