

Submission: Australian Federal Budget 2020-21

CBM Australia
December 2019

Summary of recommendations

In order to strengthen Australia's foreign policy, affirm a national legacy of leadership in disability-inclusive development, and restore transparency to the Australian aid program, the Australian Government should:

1. New development cooperation policy
 - 1.1. Ensure that all additional budget expenditure allocated to the Pacific Step Up in the 2020-21 federal budget is provided through additional funding to the development cooperation budget.
2. Overall aid budget:
 - 2.1. Increase funding for development cooperation to at least 0.5 per cent of GNI within 5 years, in line with the bipartisan report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.
 - 2.2. Increase the proportion of funding allocated to civil society to 20% of ODA commensurate with the OECD DAC donor average. An initial investment of \$50 million to the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) should be made in the 2020-21 financial year.
 - 2.3. By end of 2022, increase the allocation within the humanitarian budget to at least 5 per cent, which specifically supports disability inclusion, including in DRR investments [programs and activities], across the Asia Pacific.
3. Disability-inclusive development:
 - 3.1. Increase the existing \$12.9 million annual investment in disability-specific funding by \$1 million in the 2020-21 financial year.
 - 3.2. Ensure the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has sufficient core departmental budget for staff and associated support costs to enable the effective implementation, monitoring and advocacy to support the current and subsequent *Development for All* strategies, in Canberra and at Posts.
 - 3.3. Over the forward estimates, commit dedicated funds to support the implementation of the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through a regional funding mechanism, and mobilise other donors to contribute resources for this purpose.

4. Budget monitoring and reporting:

- 4.1. Introduce and report against an ambitious target to accelerate disability inclusion efforts in all areas of aid investment.

About CBM Australia

CBM Australia is an international Christian development agency, committed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the poorest places in the world. In 2019, CBM Australia supported field projects in 11 countries and supported partners including governments, multilateral organisations, non-government organisations and DPOs in 18 countries.

CBM Australia is proud to have a partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as part of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), and is a member of the Australian Council for International Development.

Background

The Australian Government has been a champion of and global leader in disability-inclusive development for more than a decade. This work has been supported by key investments within the development cooperation program, which have returned significant results for minimal expense.

Including people with disabilities in development investments not only upholds Australia's values-based and strategic commitments; it also maximises value. Australia has made commitments to leave no one behind and this means ensuring that, by 2030, people with disabilities along with others will no longer experience barriers to improvements in education, employment, access to infrastructure, health or gender equality. Disability inclusion cuts across all programs, sectors and contexts for the Australian development policy and needs an effective, inclusive budget to enable continued success for the Australian Government in disability-inclusive development.

In order to support development cooperation activities which best address poverty, inequality and injustice, with particular reference to the needs of people with disabilities, this submission makes four recommendations relating to inclusive budgeting considerations for the 2020-2021 financial year.

1. New Development Cooperation Policy

1.1 Priorities for a new development cooperation policy

CBM Australia welcomes the Government's intention to create a new Australian development cooperation policy. This is an opportunity to build a new, modernised development cooperation program which can alleviate poverty, inequality and injustice, while strengthening our international relationships.

To date, the Australian Government has shown commendable global leadership in putting disability rights at the forefront of its international development approach. This work has been underpinned by the Australian Governments successive strategies on disability-inclusive development.

Despite the concerted efforts of the Australian Government and the development sector there is still much to be achieved. The UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development, released late in 2018, found that people with disabilities are still disadvantaged compared with those without disabilities in the global, regional and national efforts towards the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals.

CBM Australia calls on the Australian Government to renew its commitment to people with disabilities in the poorest nations around the world. This can be achieved by ensuring that in a new aid development cooperation policy people with disabilities are not left behind, but are the focus of efforts to alleviate poverty, fight injustice and protect human rights, in all least-developed countries around the world. This focus should not be limited solely to our immediate geographical neighbourhood.

Australia's shifting aid focus to the Pacific should not be funded through redirecting nor redistributing aid budget from other areas of the aid budget. Funding the Pacific Step Up needs to be done in addition to existing aid commitments elsewhere in the world and should not be a burden carried squarely on the shoulders of an already diminished aid budget.

In the 2020-21 federal budget, the Australian Government should commit to ensuring that all additional budget expenditure allocated to the Pacific Step Up is provided through additional funding to the development cooperation budget.

2. Overall aid budget

2.1 Increase funding for development cooperation

In the years since the introduction of Australia's flagship Foreign Policy White Paper, designed to guide a decade of influence and investment, the Australian Government has strengthened and specified its particular commitments to the Pacific region. Deemed a 'step up' grounded in a 'clear

understanding of the region's potential as well as its challenges',¹ this foreign policy focus builds upon the relationships developed through years of targeted, effective aid investments. Yet this step up remains unaccompanied by growth in the overall Australian aid budget. The Government's commitment to a new Development Cooperation Policy will remain tenuous and unsustainable without increased investment to put the policy into action.

Although intra-portfolio reallocations have seen increased funds directed to the Pacific, growth in the aid budget as a whole is necessary to sustain development outcomes and underpin closer engagement, without compromising aid effectiveness and relations elsewhere in our region and beyond. Such growth is feasible in the 2019-20 financial year; with the Treasurer having announced a projected budget surplus at April's budget, the time is right to reconsider the projected freeze to the aid budget articulated in the forward estimates.

At minimum, the 2020-21 federal budget should commit to increasing funding for development cooperation to at least 0.5 per cent of GNI within 5 years, in line with the bipartisan report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

In the 2020-21 federal budget, the Australian Government should commit to increasing aid in order to reach the top half of the ranked 29 members of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee within the next decade. This is consistent with the Australian Council for International Development's call to rebuild the aid program to 0.7 per cent of GNI within 10 years.

2.2 Investing in effectiveness through ANCP

Australian aid not only reflects the character of most Australians; it is also an effective investment in reducing poverty and inequality, and contributing to mutual development outcomes. The Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) has, since its inception, proved itself to be among the Australian aid program's most effective investments. In reporting its progress against the Sustainable Development Goals, the Australian Government cited ANCP initiatives—including CBM Australia's partnership with the NORFIL Foundation in the Philippines to establish groups of parents of children with disabilities to work with local councils—as evidence of Australia's commitment and performance in prioritising equality and inclusion.²

With ANCP projects held up as examples of Australian best practice in achieving impact and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Australian Government should increase its financial investment in the program. ANCP, without the provision of indexation, continues to decline in real terms. The program continues to yield disproportionately high outcomes relative to financial size. In the 2020-21 federal budget, the Australian Government should therefore invest in performance, and increase funding to ANCP by \$50 million for the

¹ Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Marise Payne, 10 September 2018. *State of the Pacific Conference: Welcoming Remarks*. Available at foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2018/mp_sp_180910.aspx.

² Australian Government, 2018. *Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*. DFAT, Canberra. p. 72.

coming financial year.

This investment would form a core component of a commitment to ODA expenditure, invested through Civil Society Organisations, increasing to 20 per cent, up from current levels of 11 per cent.

2.3 Investing in inclusive humanitarian responses

ACFID's Humanitarian Reference Group released a policy report in 2019 which recognised that "The Government's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disability, the specific focus on the needs of people with disabilities in disasters and support to local disabled people's organisations (DPOs) is to be further commended."

Australia's humanitarian assistance to countries in the Asia Pacific region helps to strengthen resilience and mitigate the impact of disasters and humanitarian crises. Humanitarian crises reverse hard-won development gains, increase poverty and can result in instability that can last for decades.

On average 198.8 million people were affected by natural disasters each year globally.³ The Asia Pacific region is most prone to both natural and man-made hazards.⁴ The Australian Government must continue to prioritise people with disabilities in humanitarian investments, ensuring all humanitarian program are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities and all data is disaggregated, and reported on. As well as inclusion in the humanitarian strategy, a third iteration of DFAT's disability-inclusive development strategy, Development for All, would be an opportune moment to reiterate Australia's commitment on the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian action.

There is a need for increased funding for protection, gender and inclusion as a component of DFAT's humanitarian expenditure, and to transparently report back on these allocations regularly. The 2020-21 budget should include an increased allocation within the humanitarian budget to specifically support disability inclusion, including in DRR investments [programs and activities], across the Asia Pacific.

- a. This must include targeted efforts to create the enabling environment for leadership and participation by people with disabilities, including core funding for disabled people's organisations.
- b. It must also include actions to identify and address specific barriers to disability inclusion throughout all DRR investments.

This investment will create more resilient and inclusive communities through action in both of the above mentioned areas.

³ Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) (2018), *Disasters 2018: Year in Review*. Retrieved from <https://cred.be/sites/default/files/CredCrunch54.pdf>. This includes Floods, storms, droughts and extreme temperatures, earthquakes and tsunamis, volcanic activity and wildfires.

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (2017), *Disability in Asia and the Pacific: The Facts*

3. Disability-inclusive development

3.1 Increasing disability-specific funding

In 2019, the Australian Government and global community of disability-inclusive development actors marked ten years since the introduction of *Development for All*; Australia's—and the world's—first strategy for disability-inclusive international development.

In the decade since, consistent bipartisanship has driven real achievements, including embedding disability inclusion as a crosscutting theme of Australia's aid program;⁵ establishing inclusive approaches to humanitarian response and disaster preparedness;⁶ and facilitating high-level policy discussions through co-chairing the Global Action on Disability Network.⁷ At the highest levels, a recent Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluation of implementation of *Development for All* found that the aid program has made good progress in strengthening disability inclusion. This was attributed, in part, to enablers including dedicated funding for disability-inclusive development, which was described by evaluation respondents as 'catalytic'⁸ and a 'key driver'⁹ for effective inclusion practice.

The same evaluation also found scope for improvement. In order for Australia to maintain and build upon its global leadership in disability-inclusive development, there is an identified need for the aid program to strengthen outcomes in lagging areas including regional programs; sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, water and livelihoods; and the participation of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in humanitarian assistance.¹⁰ Without additional, dedicated funding, these priority action areas will continue to fall behind.

Despite the abundant need and evidence for budgetary growth, funding for disability-inclusive development has remained stagnant at \$12.9 million per annum since the introduction of the current *Development for All* strategy in 2015; this amount has not even grown in line with the Consumer Price Index. In order to make up for lost funding and drive urgent action in the final year of the current strategy, the Australian Government should increase the existing \$12.9 million annual investment in disability-specific funding by \$1 million in the 2020-21 federal budget.

3.2 Equipping DFAT to deliver on DID commitments

The ODE evaluation also found that performance in disability-inclusive development was supported by access to expertise and technical assistance, both internal and external. The

⁵ Office of Development Effectiveness, 2018. *Development for All: Evaluation of progress made in strengthening disability inclusion in Australian aid*. DFAT, Canberra. p. 2.

⁶ Australian Government, 2017. *Fact sheet: Australian Humanitarian Partnership*. DFAT, Canberra.

⁷ GLAD Network. *The Network*. Available from gladnetwork.net/network.

⁸ Office of Development Effectiveness. p. 59.

⁹ Office of Development Effectiveness. p. 60.

¹⁰ Office of Development Effectiveness. p. 3.

evaluation explicitly called for the Australian Government to '[build] DFAT's internal technical capacity to support disability inclusion by significantly increasing the number of staff positions in the Disability Section in Canberra',¹¹ among other measures. CBM Australia strongly supports this recommendation. While increased administered funds to support disability inclusion in the Australian aid program are critical, their correlation to outcomes in programs and policy depends on increased capacity to deliver targeted support, both in Canberra and at Posts.

In the 2020-21 federal budget, the Australian Government should ensure that DFAT has sufficient core departmental budget for staff and associated support costs to enable the effective implementation, monitoring and advocacy supporting the implementation of current and subsequent *Development for All* strategies on disability inclusion.

3.3 Supporting a regional approach to disability rights in the Pacific

The Australian Government's overarching and renewed commitment to the Pacific provides significant opportunities to support much-needed disability inclusion outcomes, while asserting continued leadership in the region. The Pacific is home to a number of highly capable disabled people's organisations, such as the regional Pacific Disability Forum; however, stretched capacity combined with complex needs has meant that progress in ensuring the inclusion of people with disabilities in development efforts has been historically mixed. At the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals, countries in the Pacific recorded notable achievements in improving early childhood education. But many children with disabilities were left behind: in Vanuatu, only 15 per cent of girls with disabilities were completing primary education, compared to 72 per cent without disabilities.¹²

In the years since, new rights-based development frameworks have been introduced to bolster inclusion in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals. The *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 2016-2025* (PFRPD) in particular exists to 'support Pacific governments to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities] and provide a regional modality to strengthen coordination and collaboration in support of national initiatives.'¹³ To date, however, progress towards the PFRPD's intended outcomes has stalled, due largely to limited funding available for its implementation.

As a significant Pacific donor, influential development partner, and good neighbour, the Australian Government should commit to making implementation of the PFRPD a priority as it 'steps up' Pacific engagement and moves towards the third iteration of the *Development for All* strategy. Over the forward estimates, the Australian Government should commit dedicated funds to supporting the implementation of the PFRPD, and mobilise other donors to contribute resources for this

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Vanuatu National Statistics Office and UNICEF, 2015. *Children, Women and Men with Disabilities in Vanuatu: What do the data say?* UNICEF, Suva. p. 33.

¹³ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016. *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 2016 -2025*. PIFS, Suva. p. 5.

purpose.

The strategic direction, necessary governance mechanisms and regional buy-in for a cohesive approach to disability inclusion in the Pacific have been established; it is now up to those with the financial means, including the Australian Government, to invest in its success.

4. Budget monitoring and reporting

4.1 Accelerating progress through a target for disability-inclusive development

In the context of marking a decade of achievement in including people with disabilities in Australian aid efforts, the introduction of an ambitious target to accelerate disability inclusion efforts in all areas of Australian aid investment would be timely.

In publicly available performance reports, action on disability inclusion has been variable across Australian aid initiatives. While thematic areas such as education and health have performed consistently strongly in identifying and addressing barriers to inclusion, as well as actively engaging DPOs, other sectors including agriculture, infrastructure and trade are falling increasingly further behind.¹⁴

In order to ensure that any increases to the disability-inclusive development budget are accompanied by improved performance, the Australian Government should introduce a target of a 15 per cent increase in the number of aid investments, in each investment priority area, rated 'satisfactory' on disability inclusion.

¹⁴ See Australian Government, 2017. *Performance of Australian Aid 2015-16*. DFAT, Canberra. p. 94.