

CONTRIBUTE AUSTRALIA'S FAIR SHARE TO PREVENTING AND TACKLING HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

As one of the world's richest countries, Australia can and should do more to help vulnerable communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian emergencies. Economic losses from disasters are in the billions of dollars every year. Australia should increase its support to help communities respond after disaster strikes, as well as invest in effective disaster risk reduction programs. These programs save lives and money, and enable those affected to quickly rebuild their lives after the emergency has passed. Every dollar spent on disaster risk reduction can save between \$2 and \$10 in the costs of responding once a crisis hits.¹

With 60 million people displaced by conflict, Australia must also step up and take its fair share of refugees and humanitarian migrants.

WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

CONTRIBUTE OUR FAIR SHARE.

Contribute Australia's fair share of total global funding needs to prevent and tackle humanitarian emergencies. Set official humanitarian assistance at a minimum of 10% and disaster risk reduction funding at a minimum of 3% of a growing aid program on an annual basis.

INCREASE OUR REFUGEE INTAKE.

Increase Australia's humanitarian refugee intake from 13,750 to 30,000 per year in light of continued and growing global protection needs.

WHY

Humanitarian emergencies and disasters are growing in number and intensity, while climate change is increasingly leading to more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Escalating conflict is also having a devastating effect on civilians resulting in large-scale displacement, poverty and migration. Yet Australia's capacity to respond is decreasing, with cuts to the humanitarian budget as part of cuts to the overall aid budget.

Australia is limited in its ability to respond to humanitarian crises in a flexible way, with only up to \$130 million in the emergency fund in the budget. Globally, international humanitarian aid has failed to keep pace with the realities

on the ground. Since 2000, donor governments including Australia have, on average, met less than two-thirds of the needs set out in United Nations (UN) humanitarian appeals.² During this same period, the gap between requirements and actual funding provided to meet humanitarian needs has also grown significantly.³ As a good international citizen, and as one of the world's richest countries, Australia must contribute its fair share to humanitarian appeals. Official humanitarian assistance must be set at a minimum of 10% of a growing Australian aid program on an annual basis.

The Australian Government can also help to minimise the costs and impacts of disasters by assisting poorer nations to better manage and plan for shocks and stresses. Economic losses from disasters are now reaching an average of about \$320 billion (USD \$250 billion) to \$390 billion (USD \$300 billion) every year.⁴ Disaster risk reduction programs are proven to protect long-term development gains, minimise economic losses and prevent damage to infrastructure, and are less costly than responding after disaster strikes. The UN estimates that an investment of \$7.7 billion (USD \$6 billion) annually in disaster risk management would result in avoided losses of \$463 billion (USD \$360 billion) over the next 15 years.⁵

However, building the resilience of poorer nations to disasters requires long-term focus and investment. Short-sighted cuts to Australia's disaster risk reduction investment is undermining our significant progress in supporting governments and communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and better manage and prepare for them. Australia must commit to ensuring that disaster risk reduction funding is at least 3% of a growing aid program.

The world is also now facing the largest displacement crisis since World War II, with around 60 million people forcibly displaced globally. While no one country can solve the global refugee crisis, Australia can and must do more. The Australian Government should increase its humanitarian intake to 20,000 people immediately from a current level of 13,750 and — in light of continued and growing global protection needs — increase this intake to 30,000 people as a matter of urgency.

ABOUT OXFAM

Around the world, one person in three lives in poverty. Oxfam is determined to change that by mobilising the power of people against poverty. Globally, Oxfam works to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive. We save lives and help rebuild livelihoods when crisis strikes. And we campaign so that the voices of poor people influence the local and global decisions that affect them. In all we do, Oxfam works with partner organisations and alongside vulnerable women and men to end the injustices that cause poverty.

Oxfam Australia, a partner of the Australian Government, is an independent, not-for-profit, international development organisation. We have more than 550,000 supporters in Australia who contribute skills, time and financial support to advance our work in Australia and around the world.

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- 1 International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction: Building Safer, Resilient Communities, available at www.ifrc.org/Global/global-alliance-reduction.pdf
 - 2 See Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015, available at www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GHA-Report-2015_-Interactive_Online.pdf and Smith and Swithern (2014), The 2014 UN appeal: Different process, greater needs, available at www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/UN-response-crisis-2014-final2.pdf
 - 3 *ibid.*
 - 4 Global Assessment Report 2015, available at www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2015/en/gar-pdf/GAR2015_EN.pdf
 - 5 *ibid.*