



Australian Government

AusAID

## AusAID / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation

A Joint Committee of the Australian Agency for International Development and Australian Non Government Organisations

### Notes from the CDC

### Highlights of the 109<sup>th</sup> CDC meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Attendance:

#### NGO Representatives

Ms Wendy Rose

Ms Karen Hill

Mr Jamie Isbister

#### AusAID Representatives

Mr Peter Smith

Ms Sue Connell

#### Chair

Ms Ellen Shipley

#### CPS Representatives

Mr Conrad Bulenda

Ms Jessica Hoverman

Ms Rosemary Cassidy

Ms Rhonda Bobbin

Ms Ines Tallos

#### Observers

Ms Trish McEwan, ACFID

#### Apologies

Rev John Deane

Mr David Syme

Ms Margaret Winn

#### AusAID Representatives

Mr Murray Proctor

Mr Andrew Edge

### Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Ms Ellen Shipley, Chair of the meeting welcomed members to CDC 109.

### ITEM 1 CDC 108 MEETING

#### 1.1 Minutes of 108 Meeting

##### Information Item:

Minutes of the meeting held at AusAID on 10 March 2005 as circulated and approved were accepted.

### ITEM 2 POLICY AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

#### 2.1 AusAID issues and priorities

**Information and discussion items:** Ms Shipley introduced the new AusAID Deputy Director General, Mr Murray Proctor. Mr Proctor provided an update on the tsunami reconstruction work and budget outcomes.

- Tsunami - The government had committed \$60 million for humanitarian relief following the tsunami. Of this, \$44 million had been expensed, \$15 million had been committed and \$1 million remained.

The \$1 billion allocated for Indonesia was to be distributed equally between loans and development funds. It was to be oversighted by a high level commission made up of GoA and GoI officials. The funds would be disbursed through existing AusAID channels with policy decisions made by a committee of APS Secretaries supported by a Secretariat based at DFAT. Some aspects of the package include: \$50 million for immediate reconstruction in Aceh to restore health, hospital and education services; 600 extra scholarships and \$15 million for disaster preparedness and responses to other recent disasters. \$175 million has been allocated and the remainder is still under discussion.

A recent press conference launching the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Report on 1 June involving Minister Downer, ACFID and the 5 contracted NGOs had gone well and the key message that this was a long term program had been delivered.

To observe the 6 month anniversary of the tsunami the Prime Minister was holding a morning tea on the 20th of June for people involved in the humanitarian effort.

Mr Proctor noted that despite Aceh being a conflict zone there had been no problems with access by NGOs and Australian government personnel, or religious differences. Mr Isbister also noted good collaboration between Muslim and Christian agencies.

Mr Isbister raised the issue of the large quantities of timber needed for reconstruction and possible concerns about where this will come from. Mr Proctor replied that any Australian government projects would be using sustainable timber supplies.

- Budget outcomes - Mr Proctor provided an overview of the budget outcomes. There was a 6% increase in real terms over last year and an 11% increase over last year's budget. There was increased interest in strengthening governance, encouraging broad-based growth, promoting trade liberalisation, fragile states and trans-boundary threats, in addition to the ongoing initiatives in Indonesia and PNG.

Ms Shipley noted that it was a good outcome for the NGO sector. There was \$25.4 million allocated this year plus \$1.1 million under the Special Indian Ocean Rim Disaster Fund. Funding for the volunteer programs was increased to \$26.5 million including a doubling of the AYAD program.

Mr Proctor noted that ACFID's press statement welcoming the budget outcomes was appreciated.

Mr Isbister asked about the feeling in AusAID regarding the effectiveness of NGOs and AusAID working together on the tsunami program. Ms Shipley replied that it was very positive, particularly the communication and reporting aspects with the media launch of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Report being a highlight.

Mr Isbister asked about the tsunami funds audit results. Ms Shipley noted that AusAID had received a very positive result from the auditors regarding its processes and although there were minor issues with some NGOs these were not significant and understandable given the situation on the ground.

- White Paper – Ms Shipley provided an update on the White Paper process. The purpose of the White Paper is to examine and contest the future directions of Australia's aid engagement, particularly in its key development partnerships - namely Papua New Guinea, the Pacific, Indonesia and Asia. It will provide a medium term blueprint for Australia's future aid strategy.

A Core Group of three individuals will have overall responsibility for submitting recommendations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. There will be four geographic analyses (Pacific, PNG, Indonesia and Asia) and 2 thematic analyses (HIV/AIDS and Engaging the Australian Community).

Ms Shipley noted that she would be part of the White Paper team looking at engaging the Australian community which included the media, academia, industry, parliamentarians, the public as well as the NGOs. There would be broader consultations as a part of this process including open, public discussions in (at this stage) Melbourne and Brisbane.

- Cooperation Agreements (CAs) – Ms Ellen Shipley provided an update on the CA process and schedule. CDC members were referred to the package of documents provided, containing the schedule of current and future CAs.

Ms Shipley noted that there may be a refinement of the strategic direction of CAs and there was a desire to emphasise the relationship aspect of CAs. The current process was very resource intensive for NGOs and AusAID and would benefit from a fine-tuning of the process. Ms Trish McEwan noted that discussions at the MIFs with AusAID staff regarding CAs were very beneficial especially the clarification of the criteria and there was also a request for more pre-tender briefings.

Mr Isbister asked the question whether the CA process was delivering on the original objective of strategic engagement. Ms Shipley replied that some CAs such as Africa and the Middle East will always be activity based rather than strategic.

Mr Isbister noted that the review of the HES CA was coming up and the issue of partnerships could be looked at in that context. Mr Isbister also raised the issue of thematic CAs and whether AusAID was considering these. Ms Shipley replied that this would be more difficult given the current budgetary structure of AusAID programs however the issue may be looked at flowing out of the White Paper process. Some cross cutting issues may be worth investigating for CAs, such as HIV/AIDS.

Ms Hill asked if there was any plan to open up the CPP in PNG to organisations other than churches. Ms Shipley replied that there was no plan to do this however there were moves to look at other ways to engage with civil society in PNG.

- Volunteer Tender process – Ms Rosemary Cassidy gave the CDC a brief outline on progress so far in the tender process for provision of volunteer services. Three organisations were shortlisted; Australian Volunteers International, Australian Business Volunteers and Austraining International. Contracts with all three were currently being negotiated with a view to commencing on 1 July 2005. The tender was seen as a useful learning process for both AusAID and the tenderers in providing baseline information about costs for recruiting, training and deploying volunteers. Once engaged, the agencies will be encouraged to work together and share information through the formation of a volunteer program working group.

## 2.2 NGO priorities

**Information item:** Ms Trish McEwan provided an update on the recent MIFs on behalf of ACFID and its members. There was a good turnout in all States, with 27 attendees in Melbourne, 32 in Sydney and 9 in Canberra. Overall there was a feeling that the environment had changed and that new ways of engagement would be needed.

Issues raised at the MIFs included:

- The current relationships between AusAID and NGOs (ANCP and CAs) were seen as very important.
- Cluster Evaluations were seen as useful and were well received.
- The link between DPAC and CPS was very constructive.
- There was positive feedback on the ADPlan training and workbook.
- CA updates were received positively and the face to face meetings were seen as very useful – special thanks to Mr Alex Werchanowski and Mr Chris Yorke.
- NGOs were positive about the outcome of the budget.

Ms Hill asked whether the ADPlan proforma was up to date. Ms Shipley commented that CPS was in the process of updating and simplifying the available information on the AusAID website. There was discussion around the level of detail needed in the NGO Package of Information (NGOPI) online.

### **2.3 Performance information**

**Information and Discussion item:** Ms Shipley gave a brief summary of the Cambodia cluster evaluation, which was currently underway and referred the CDC to the ToR and timeline which were distributed to members.

Mr Isbister noted that cluster evaluations were helpful in evaluating the impact of development activities for the NGO as well as AusAID. When the results were available it would be useful to have a presentation on the process and its strengths and weaknesses.

Ms Shipley then discussed the development of a performance framework. It is clear that there will be an internal review of quality in AusAID and ANCP does not really fit well within the quality framework. More thought will need to be put into quality and performance measures for NGO activities.

Work has been progressing in AusAID on the new management information system -Aidworks. Discussions have been undertaken with IT to enable better reporting in the new system. Currently, reporting on NGO activities is problematic as information is contained in a separate module making fully integrated analysis difficult.

## **ITEM 3 ACCREDITATION**

### **3.1 Accreditation Review Reports: ALWS**

**Decision item:** CDC discussed the above report.

**CDC supported report recommendation for full accreditation of ALWS.**

### **3.2 Revised Accreditation Documents: Base criteria**

**Information and discussion item:** Ms Shipley asked for any comments on the previously distributed criteria and profile format for base agencies. Ms Rose noted that it would be useful to get feedback from reviewers after the criteria have been used a few times. Overall, the CDC was happy with the changes.

There was discussion about the distinction between base and full criteria. Ms Shipley noted that the distinction was principle-based rather than rules-based and the criteria requirements were commensurate with the size and sophistication of the organisation.

Action Item: The revised accreditation documentation will be posted in 'What's New' in the NGOPI pending the complete revision of NGOPI.

### **3.3 Accreditation Reviewers Workshop**

**Information and discussion items:** Ms Shipley presented the CDC with a draft agenda for the reviewers workshop to be held on 21 and 22 June. Ms Rose asked that if reviewers do not attend the workshop will CPS stop using them. Ms Shipley stated that although that was the rule it may be to CPS's disadvantage in some cases.

Ms Rose noted that one of the main aims of the workshop should be the sharing of knowledge and experience. CPS agreed to add this to the objectives.

#### **ITEM 4 ANCP**

**Information and discussion items:** Ms Shipley raised the issue regarding the effect of the money raised for tsunami relief would have on the NGOs RDE over the next three years. Discussion followed around whether tsunami funds would be excluded from RDEs.

ACFID was asked to give AusAID an industry readout at the next CDC concerning the effect of the money raised for tsunami relief. This would be best left until after June 30 as there would be a better idea of the impact by then.

The IPF tables were distributed to CDC members and there was discussion around various line items. Ms Shipley noted that a move to ADPlans for Base accredited agencies will have an impact on funds available for overprogramming.

#### **ITEM 5 OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **ITEM 6 NEXT MEETING**

CDC 110 Thursday 13 October. Ms Rose suggested that Mr Paul O'Callaghan and Ms Cecily Dignan might wish to attend the next CDC as an observer.