

December 2023 aid news

by Development Policy Centre

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Our monthly update of news and analysis on aid and international development, with a focus on Australian aid.

Australian aid

Australian aid and humanitarian NGOs [have welcomed](#) the Australian Government's support, along with 152 other countries, for a UN General Assembly Resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, stating that the vote "shows Australia's willingness to champion international humanitarian law to protect civilians" and "is a stand for protecting civilians in Gaza". The sector has also called on the Australian government to extend financial support to Australian non-government agencies working in Gaza – "just as the Australian public has been doing."

At the ninth Australasian AID Conference (AAC2023) held at the Australian National University in Canberra, Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister Biman Prasad laid out [an ambitious reform agenda](#) for Australia's engagement with the Pacific, encompassing aid, climate and regional integration, including visa-free movement between Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) member countries. You can [read his speech](#), [share the blog](#) and watch all of the [keynote and recorded panel presentations](#) from AAC2023 online at Devpolicy YouTube.

A landmark new security, climate, aid and migration pact between Australia and Tuvalu reached at the Pacific leaders' meeting in November has been [described by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese](#) as "the most significant agreement between Australia and a Pacific Island nation ever". The agreement still requires ratification by both countries and the agreement has become [the subject of parliamentary debate](#) in Tuvalu ahead of upcoming elections.

Civil society groups [have welcomed](#) Australia's announcement at the global climate talks in Dubai (COP-28) that it will provide \$100 million for the [Pacific Resilience Facility](#) and \$50 million for the [Green Climate Fund \(GCF\)](#). They have noted, however, that Australia's contribution to the GCF is "very modest" (the UK, for example, has committed US\$2 billion) and that Australia has not committed any

funding to the new [loss and damage fund](#) endorsed at the meeting.

A new report by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on [Australia's support for democracy in our region](#) recommends a more strategic and longer-term approach to Australia's electoral assistance programs in countries like Papua New Guinea, a funding target for programs delivered through local civil society organisations, and further support for regional independent media organisations.

DFAT has released the [2022-23 Development Program Progress Reports](#) (DPPRs) for its country and regional programs. The reports include the latest annual performance data for ongoing and completed investments, with the latter showing a substantial increase (+8% according to DFAT's latest Annual Report) in the number of investments rated as satisfactory in terms of effectiveness and/or efficiency. This will be the last batch of DPPRs as DFAT moves to mid-term reviews of country and regional strategies as part of the new International Development Policy from next year.

Regional/global aid

At his Senate confirmation hearings, the Biden administration's nominee for Deputy Secretary of State, Kurt Campbell, [has argued forcefully](#) that the Congress must approve US\$7.1 billion in requested support for the Pacific Island compact states (Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau) or "you can expect that literally the next day Chinese diplomats – military and other folks – will be on the plane... trying to secure a better deal for China."

The Congress is also yet to approve the Biden administration's [new assistance package for Ukraine](#), threatening not only continued US military support, but also humanitarian and economic aid.

Republican presidential primary frontrunner Donald Trump has said on the campaign trail that if elected [he would cancel](#) "climate reparation payments", a reference to the Biden administration's US\$3 billion pledge to the GCF.

Around a dozen Pacific states signed on to the "[Samoa Agreement](#)", an updated legal framework between the European Union and a group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries covering human rights and democracy, peace and security, economic growth, human development, climate change and migration. The new agreement is two and a half years in the making and replaces the previous "[Cotonou Agreement](#)" between the EU and the 79 ACP countries.

In its latest [reporting on global climate finance](#), the OECD has argued that whilst

overall finance from developed countries increased every year to 2021, it still fell short of the US\$100-billion-by-2020 goal agreed in 2009. It also identified “a pressing need for international providers to significantly scale up their efforts in two key areas: adaptation finance and the mobilisation of private finance.”

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak **launched a surprisingly comprehensive** and well-received new UK international development White Paper in November. With Britain’s elections likely to take place in late 2024, the Labour opposition has **broadly welcomed the new policy**, saying that it “offers a welcome change of tone, with evidence-based ideas that offer hope of a real reset and refresh for the UK on the international development stage.” However, the policy does not say when the UK will return to 0.7% of national income in aid spending and the government **has since confirmed** that this will not occur any time before 2028-29.

Books, papers, reports, podcasts etc.

One of the most influential figures in global development and finance over the last two years, Barbados’s Prime Minister Mia Mottley, has delivered **a major address** on the legacies of colonialism and slavery and the need to address global poverty and the climate crisis at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

It’s a good time to catch up on some summer listening with new seasons of the **Good Will Hunters**, **Development Intelligence Lab** and **Humanitarian Advisory Group** podcasts all launching over the last month.

In the latest edition of the *Humanitarian Leader*, Adelina Kamal, the former head of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, **makes the case** for getting “beyond the ego-system” and for new forms of “locally-led humanitarian resistance” in crisis environments such as Myanmar.

Charles Kenny from the Center for Global Development has delivered a **thought-provoking, big picture talk** on “The Future of Global Development and Implications for Aid” at Oxford University.

And watch out for what looks like an interesting new edited volume, *The Politics of Development*, that promises to “challenge readers to see politics as not only the obstacle to development, but also the means to achieve it.”

Disclosures:

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