

Aid buzz (June 6): Australia's UN conference | Aid visitors to Canberra | AusAID at Senate Estimates

Author : Jonathan Pryke

Date : June 6, 2012

Australia's UN Development Cooperation Forum

The Development Cooperation Forum is the part of the UN which discusses aid and development. This global gathering meets in New York every two years (the next such gathering is in July of this year) , and moves around the world in between, most recently meeting on 14-15 May [in Brisbane](#) on the theme of sustainability. Despite being encouraged by Australian Climate Change Parliamentary Secretary Mark Dreyfus in his [keynote](#) to "speak boldly [and] think clearly" the only "new ways of working together" the meeting was able to [come up with](#) were "exploring innovative ideas to break away from 'business as usual' financial models of aid and development cooperation" and "building on successes to help countries to bring together economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development."

Aid visitors to Canberra

In a new monthly segment we highlight the growing importance of the Australian aid program internationally by taking a look at recent aid visitors to Canberra. Here is a list from the past month. Please notify us of any omissions:

- Carol Bellamy, Chair of [The Global Partnership for Education](#), [visited](#) Australia in the end of May updating stakeholders on the GPE and its strategic planning process. AusAID, GPE's second largest donor (in the latest fundraising round), has provided this [summary](#) of Australia's engagement with the GPE.
- [Transparency International](#) Chair, Huguette Labelle, was in Canberra to [sign](#) an agreement with AusAID that included an \$11 million contribution over four years, taking Australia's total commitment up to more than \$18 million.
- [Asia Foundation](#) President David D. Arnold signed a landmark strategic agreement with AusAID, with Australia making a \$19.5 million commitment over three years to the Foundation.
- UN World Food Program Executive Director Ertherin Cousin visited AusAID to [discuss](#) the need for continued aid to Somalia and South Sudan. In 2011, AusAID was the [7th largest donor](#) to WFP.

AusAID in Senate estimates

On May 31st AusAID was brought in front of the [Senate Estimates](#) committee, a typical component of the annual budget cycle. The transcript, and list of those in attendance, is available [here](#). Devpolicy will hope to bring you a more in depth analysis in the coming weeks, but in brief here are some of the highlights:

- Australian vs. international contractors (p. 6)
- The budget, renewed scale-up trajectory and AusAID's capacity to spend that money effectively (p. 6-8)
- The slowing down of funding to Africa and the Middle East (p. 9-10)
- Famine in the horn of Africa (p. 11)
- Promoting transparency in developing countries (p. 12)
- AusAID scholarships and their impact on development (p. 13-14)
- The Indonesian, Timor-Leste and PNG aid programs (p. 15-16)
- The Independent Evaluation Committee and its members (p. 16-18)
- Broader questions on auditing and evaluation (p. 18-19)
- Volumes of contributions to family planning (p. 20-22)

- The Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (p. 23)
- Business engagement and AusAID's business community forum (p. 25)
- 15 per cent of programs 'failing or ineffective' (p. 25-26)
- The WASH program in PNG and the PNG aid program more generally (p. 29-30)
- The Pacific seasonal workers migration scheme (p. 30-31)
- TB in the Torres Straight (p. 31-35)

In brief

Daru has [taken delivery](#) of medical equipment from AusAID including the custom built sea ambulance.

AusAID has [supported](#) a Ugandan mining study tour to Australia.

AusAID has [axed a \\$3.6m contract](#) for analysis of citizens' perceptions of the aid program in Afghanistan. New [reports](#) show that the Taliban is far from defeated in Australian zone of control in Afghanistan.

AusAID has made a [renewed commitment](#) [pdf] to the water for all initiative. Adam Laidlaw recently wrote [this post](#) providing some background on WASH.

Catherine Hamlin has [announced](#) that she will withdraw support for her own Australian fundraising trust.

World Vision has taken a fresh look at the Peter Pan fairytale, linking it to child malnutrition, in this [short video](#).

[Concerns](#) that AusAID was sponsoring an organisation with terrorist links in Gaza, earlier dismissed by AusAID have risen again, this time with an MP (see [here](#)) and Senator weighing in (see [here](#)), only to be [dismissed again](#) by the Foreign Minister.

On May 19 Foreign Minister Carr [announced](#) that Australia would contribute an additional \$16 million in food and emergency medical assistance to respond to the two major escalating crises in Africa ([one](#) in the Sahal region of West Africa and the [other](#) in South Sudan). CARE has [released a report](#) on the severity of the escalating crisis. You can make your own donations through World Vision [here](#), Oxfam [here](#) and CARE [here](#).

Jonathan Pryke is a Researcher at the [Development Policy Centre](#)