



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail [australia@un.int](mailto:australia@un.int)

150 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 [www.AustraliaUN.org](http://www.AustraliaUN.org)

## UNGA 67 High Level Meeting on the Rule of Law Australian Pledges

### 1. Supporting peace and security in conflict and post-conflict situations

The rule of law is a key element of conflict prevention and a building block for sustainable peace. It can provide the crucial connection between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Nearly 60% of Australia's aid budget is directed at partnering with developing countries affected by insecurity and conflict. In supporting transitions out of conflict, Australia recognises the need for integrated approaches, including the need for a civilian-military unified response in stability operations to promote the rule of law in fragile states. We also recognise the need for fast-deployable civilian capacity to support budding rule of law activities in peace operations. With this in mind:

- a. In 2012/2013, Australia will provide a further \$12 million in core support to the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Fund over four years to strengthen institutional capacity in post-conflict countries and prevent a relapse into violence. That takes Australia's contribution to \$23 million.
- b. In 2012/2013, Australia will provide an additional un-earmarked \$2 million to the UN Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery to give this crisis agency the ability to be responsive and catalytic in fragile situations.
- c. In 2012-2015, Australia will commit \$4 million of core funding to the UN Department of Political Affairs. In 2012, Australia also committed an additional \$500,000 to DPA's mediation and post-conflict planning work in Libya.
- d. By 2014, Australia will have 500 highly experienced and trained civilian specialists ready to deploy at short notice to countries experiencing fragility, including to strengthen governance and legal institutions. Several of these advisers have recently deployed to Afghanistan and Sierra Leone.
- e. In 2012, Australia will provide an additional \$250,000 to the *Women's Leadership for Peace and Security in the Greater Horn of Africa* to advance women's contribution to national and regional peacebuilding decision-making processes.
- f. In 2013, Australia will host a regional Expert Workshop for Armed Forces on *Promoting military operational practice that ensures safe access to and delivery of health care in armed conflict and other emergencies*, as part of the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) *Health Care in Danger* project.

## **2. Partnering with developing countries to support their rule of law priorities**

Australia recognises that effective law and justice systems are critical to creating stable environments which foster long-term poverty reduction, sustained economic growth and security in developing countries. We support developing countries to implement their rule of law priorities and build the trust of citizens in Government. With this in mind:

- a. In 2012-2013, Australia commits to providing \$314 million to partner developing countries to strengthen the rule of law in areas such as increasing access to justice for poor and marginalised people; ending violence against women; increasing community security; and increasing accountability in public service delivery.
- b. Over the next four years, Australia commits \$89 million to our Pacific Police Development Program. Under the Program, Australia works closely with 12 Pacific Island States to enhance operational policing capacity, improve police service delivery and security, strengthen community engagement and enhance justice and human rights.
- c. By 2016, Australia commits to training 14,000 law and justice officials in developing countries to improve community safety.
- d. From 2012-2013, Australia will assist Cambodia to implement a National Crime Database and Court Register to strengthen administration of law and justice nationwide.
- e. Over the next two years, Australia will provide technical assistance and training to the financial intelligence units and law enforcement authorities in over a dozen partner countries in a joint effort to identify, seize and confiscate illicit assets and proceeds of crime, to combat corruption, to disrupt financial flows of organised criminal groups, and to cooperate in identifying and sharing information about specific transnational threats.
- f. In 2012-13, Australia commits \$8.5 million to work with ASEAN partners to strengthen the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons by working with law enforcement, and improving judicial and prosecutorial functions in ASEAN member countries.

### 3. Gender and the rule of law

Australia recognises the important role of women in strengthening the rule of law. We are committed to ensuring that women, both in Australia and throughout the world, are equal before the law, have access to justice mechanisms and experience equal opportunities to participate in governance and decision-making. With that in mind:

- a. Over the next 10 years, Australia will commit \$320 million to the Pacific Gender Equality Initiative: *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development*. The Initiative will increase access to justice for women in informal and formal mechanisms, improve safety through violence prevention and advance legal and regulatory reforms consistently with the *Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women*. The Initiative also aims to increase the representation of women, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles, in political and governance institutions.
- b. Over the next four years, Australia will provide \$48.5 million in core funding to UN Women. This includes annual core funding to UN Women of \$8 million in 2012–2013, increasing to \$20 million by 2015–2016. This funding will support UN Women’s role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and strengthening global efforts to promote gender equality and empower women. This includes UN Women’s important international advocacy and work with national partners to reform laws that discriminate against women, in relation to property, the family, employment and citizenship; to support women’s access to justice; and to strengthen women’s leadership and participation in setting and enforcing laws.
- c. From 2012 to 2017, Australia commits \$60 million to the *Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction Program*. Working closely with Indonesian counterparts, Australian support will target improvements to policy and regulatory reforms that constrain women’s progress on poverty reduction, including women’s access to governance institutions and services.

#### **4. Continuing Australia's commitment to international law and multilateral efforts to strengthen the rule of law**

Australia is committed to ratifying multilateral treaties that strengthen the rule of law. To that end, we are making concrete efforts to adopt national legislation for the implementation of those treaties. For example:

- a. In 2013, Australia will deposit our instrument of ratification for the *Convention on Cluster Munitions*. Australia has enacted the necessary legislation to give effect to the Convention under domestic law. We are working to lodge Australia's instrument of ratification and become a Party to this important Convention.
- b. In 2012, Australia pledges to prioritise the preparation of legislation that will enable it to ratify the *Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 2002* (OPCAT).

#### **5. Continuing to strengthen the rule of law in Australia**

Australia is committed to full implementation of its international law obligations. We will establish and strengthen mechanisms to ensure full domestic implementation of international human rights law. This means continued commitment to action at home. For example:

- a. In 2013, Australia will launch a new *Human Rights Action Plan* to further strengthen our compliance with the core UN human rights treaties. For the first time, the new Action Plan was informed by a thorough Baseline Study in 2011. Under the new Plan, Australia will undertake a range of measures to further improve human rights, including: collecting better data to measure human rights compliance; a review of Australia's reservations under human rights treaties; a review of legislation to remove barriers that discriminate against older people in the workplace; and laying foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- b. In 2013, Australia will appoint a National Children's Commissioner within the Australian Human Rights Commission.
- c. In 2012/2013, as part of Australia's *Human Rights Framework*, Australia will deliver a public sector education and training package on human rights to ensure delivery services and development of policies, programs and legislation in a manner compatible with Australia's international human rights obligations.
- d. In 2013, Australia will complete a comprehensive and independent *Review of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance* to improve access to justice for Australia's most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and to strengthen the effectiveness of legal assistance service delivery. The Review will establish a

robust evidence base for the development of policy and program implementation to improve legal assistance under legal aid commissions, community legal centres, indigenous legal services and family violence prevention legal services.

- e. In 2012, with the commencement of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*, all new legislation before the Australian Parliament will be accompanied with a Statement of Compatibility that will outline how that legislation is compatible with Australia's obligations under the seven core human rights treaties. Further, a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights has been established in the Australian Parliament to examine legislation for compatibility with Australia's human rights obligations.
- f. In 2012, Australia will release draft legislation to consolidate Federal anti-discrimination law. The reform aims to simplify provisions, remove complexity and give greater guidance for users, particularly employers and employees. Also in 2012, Australia will launch a new *Anti-Racism Strategy*, to be implemented over the next four years.
- g. In 2012, Australia will launch its first *National Anti-Corruption Plan*. While Australia has a strong record in combating corruption, we cannot become complacent. The Plan will ensure Australia is well positioned to deliver a coordinated approach to combating current and emerging corruption risks.