

Mr Kevin Rudd MHR

Minister for Foreign Affairs,

House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

October 30. 2010

Dear Minister Rudd,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Australia and the world re Australia's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the 15 year action plan to tackle global poverty. I am particularly interested in alleviating poverty, because I see poverty as a primary cause of the trafficking of women and children into sexual slavery.

The 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women's Call to Action (March 2010) stated that:

Global, national and local strategies, including for the achievement of the MDGs, must be re-directed to a more participatory and human rights based approach, including mainstreaming a gender perspective in all programs and policies.

Jo Chandler in 'The Age' Saturday October 16, 2010 also reminded us that "The number of people going hungry in the world is still an estimated 925 million. Disproportionately, those going without are children and women."

An earlier article in the Age (18/02/10) noted that:

Australia's per capita income is higher than that of many affluent nations, including Sweden, Denmark and Britain. By contrast, a billion people on our planet struggle to survive on the purchasing power of \$US 1.25 a day or less. They are likely to go to bed hungry, can't afford even the most basic healthcare and their children whom they may not be able to afford to send to school are likely to get ill because they don't have safe drinking water.

Being reminded about these unwelcome facts really worries me. From the website we learn that every week each one of us puts in around \$3.30 to pay for our aid program – about the cost of a cup of coffee!

During your term as Prime Minister, Mr Rudd, you pledged to raise Australia's foreign aid to 0.5 per cent and the present government's forward spending estimates that promise will be met in 2010. In fact, Australia gives 0.34% of our national income.

Five countries – Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have given 0.7% for decades. Netherlands has a population of 15 million. European Union's 27 countries, (with the exception

of Ireland Greece and Spain) have maintained their contribution of an average of 0.47% in spite of the financial crisis. We are as rich as Britain and Sweden, and due to your sound economic management we have survived the Global Financial Crisis.

We have millions of the world's poor closer to our borders than they do. Is there any reason why we cannot give as much as they do? We have long admired your commitment to social justice issues and the work of the United Nations. We therefore, urge you to do all in your power to increase our aid and to ensure a gender perspective in all programs and policies.

Yours sincerely,