15 May 2018

Subject: Questionnaire on Informal Settlements and Human Rights – Australia

The Australian Government has the pleasure to provide the following information to assist in the preparation of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing's report, focusing on the issue of informal settlements, to the UN Human Rights Council.

Introduction

1. **Has your agency been involved in projects or programmes in partner countries that aimed to upgrade informal settlements, improve the housing conditions or the access of residents of informal settlements to water and sanitation, health care, education, work, energy, transport or other public services? If yes could you provide more details.**

Yes, the Australian aid program has been involved in a number of projects and programs that aim to upgrade informal settlements, particularly in small island developing states in the Pacific region. However, the bulk of our relevant investments are mainstreamed across larger projects that focus upon issues such as urbanisation, service delivery and governance reforms.

Mainstream investments that may include informal settlements are:
- Urbanisation-specific investments that support partner governments with urban planning, the delivery of essential services, public transport, waste collection and improved community awareness and engagement with municipal services. For example, in Tonga, Australia is supporting the Nuku'alofa Urban Development Sector Project (NUDSP) led by the Asian Development Bank to improve the policy environment for urban planning and the availability of water supply, and to increase consumer access to waste management services. NUDSP ensures that Nuku'alofa's water supply has significantly less impact on fragile groundwater resources while providing an emergency water supply in the event of a natural disaster.
- Infrastructure investments that enable partner governments to provide transport, storm water drainage, energy, water and sanitation, telecommunication and information and communications technology infrastructure to urban populations, as well as supporting improved urban-rural linkages to support economic growth and job creation in rural areas that helps to relieve pressure on urban areas.
- Climate change and disaster risk-reduction investments that help partner countries to reduce emissions, build resilience to climate-related shocks and manage the impacts of climate change in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. For example, Cyclone Winston

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affected approximately 540,000 people in Fiji and compromised the livelihoods of almost 60 per cent of the population in 2016. The ongoing reconstruction efforts highlight the long-term impact of natural disasters and how they can compound existing social and economic challenges. Safeguard policies for the environment and displacement and resettlement enable Australia to actively identify, avoid and mitigate adverse environmental and social impacts of our investments in urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

- Investments in agriculture and fisheries help to meet demand for food in growing urban populations as well as providing opportunities for producers/entrepreneurs to participate more effectively in local, national and international markets.
- Governance investments support the stronger operation of the public sector, including in relation to public policies and equitable service delivery to both formal and informal settlements.
- Law and justice investments improve the safety and security of urban populations in both formal and informal settlements.
- Delivery of essential services to urban populations, including education and health services.
- Twin-track investments in gender equality contribute towards equitable access to essential services, justice, jobs, economic opportunities and resources for both men and women in urban populations.
- Twin-track investments in disability inclusion contribute towards equitable access to essential services and economic opportunities for people living with a disability in urban populations.

2. **Has your agency provided assistance to improve the security of tenure of residents in informal settlements or provided advice or has your agency assisted partner countries in turning informal settlements into legalized settlements? If yes, could you provide more details.**

Yes. However, we are unable to provide disaggregated analysis at this time because our assistance to informal settlements is often mainstreamed across larger projects, including around urbanisation, service delivery and law and justice reforms.

3. **Has your development cooperation agency adopted a policy on resettlement of households living in informal settlements? To what extent are these policies anchored on international human rights standards? Please share a copy or provide a link where the respective policies can be accessed.**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has adopted an *Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program* which includes a focus on displacement and resettlement:
http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/environmental-social-safeguard-policy-for-the-aid-program.aspx

This policy assists DFAT to meet its obligations under Australian laws which apply to aid investments, including the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*. By requiring Australian aid investments to conserve and sustainably use natural resources and protect vulnerable and marginalised groups this policy contributes to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It supports efforts of development partners to harmonise their safeguards and is closely aligned with the policies of key DFAT bilateral and multilateral partners, including the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank Group.

4. **How much of the overall official development assistance has been dedicated to projects that had the aim of upgrading informal settlements or improving living conditions in informal settlements? Could you kindly provide financial statistics over the last five years?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide disaggregated financial statistics at this time.

5. **Does your development agency follow a human rights-based approach or has it adopted a human rights policy? If yes, can you share the policy and describe how it has been applied for projects aimed at improving housing conditions or upgrading of informal settlements?**

Australia's development program supports Australia's human rights objectives, especially by tackling gender inequality, promoting disability-inclusive development and funding multilateral human rights bodies. While the Australian Government does not explicitly use a 'rights-based approach' terminology, human rights principles are integrated into our approach to development.

6. **To what extent are projects or programmes that aim to upgrade informal settlements linked to the goals and targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development?**

The majority of our projects and programmes were designed before the 2030 Agenda was adopted but nonetheless contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Australia's development assistance is increasingly being aligned to the SDGs.

7. **Could you provide more details about the respective projects and programmes, including in which partner country/ies they were/are located, the respective name(s) of the informal settlement(s), its/their location and the socio-economic and demographic profile of the residents of the respective informal settlement(s). If possible, could you share relevant project documentation, including evaluation reports?**

We are unable to provide disaggregated analysis at this time because our assistance to informal settlements is often mainstreamed across larger projects, including around urbanisation, service delivery and law and justice reforms.

- **Solomon Islands**

  Solomon Islands demonstrates that urbanisation can contribute towards development as well as exacerbate tensions if the resulting challenges are left unchecked. Solomon Islands is an archipelagic state in the Pacific Ocean with a population of around 555,000 and with 63 distinct languages and numerous local dialects. The capital, Honiara, is located on an island called Guadalcanal. In December 1998, existing ethnic tensions on Guadalcanal rapidly escalated.

  In April 2003, the then Prime Minister of Solomon Islands made an urgent request for international assistance. In response, the countries of the Pacific region formed the 'Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands' (RAMSI), led by Australia. Australia's investment of nearly $3 billion over 14 years (95% of RAMSI's funding) and the deployment of thousands of police, military, advisers and diplomats from several different federal agencies, put an end to a grim humanitarian situation on Australia's doorstep and rebuilt a disintegrating nation that threatened security and stability in the broader Pacific region. As soon as peace was restored, RAMSI began, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, to rebuild national institutions. After a decade of support, the economy had grown more than 80 percent, there was new government infrastructure and strengthened democratic and public service accountability systems. In 2017, RAMSI transferred the final responsibility for policing and national security to a well-trained and partly re-armed police force that was already supporting other police services in the region.

  More information is available at these websites:

  http://www.ramsi.org/
  http://dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon-islands/development-assistance/Pages/development-assistance-in-solomon-islands.aspx

- **India**

  The Asha Society has transformed the lives of around 500,000 people in 71 of Indian's poorest communities over the past 28 years. Asha, meaning 'hope' in Hindi, gives people in slum areas the support to realise their potential, regardless of their background, caste or religious beliefs. Asha's founder, Dr Kiran Martin, started out as a young paediatrician responding to a cholera outbreak in one of the slums of Delhi working from a borrowed table. Today, Asha runs a suite of health, education and economic inclusion programs. Asha's centres on community empowerment, encouraging residents who receive support to 'pay it forward'. Asha also focuses on training community members and enabling them to achieve change, supporting women to gain the confidence to approach government officials, police and head teachers to improve their environment and opportunities for education. For example, each member of a women's group takes responsibility for a lane within her community. Together, they hold weekly meetings to address health problems, crime, domestic violence, school dropouts and many other

problems or issues. The women also hold regular public meetings to help pass on their messages to the communities at large.

The Australian Government has supported Asha for over 25 years, including through DFAT's Direct Aid Program. Asha also partners with private sector players such as Macquarie Global, Rio Tinto, Pepsi, the Pratt Foundation, The Australian (newspaper), Bausch and Lomb, Bendigo Bank and Yering Station winery. Cultural, sporting and academic institutions including the University of Melbourne, the Australian World Orchestra and cricketer Damien Fleming have lent support.

More information is available at these websites:
https://asha-india.org/
http://www.australianfriendsofashaslums.org.au/

- **Indonesia**
  http://dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/development-assistance/Pages/inclusive-society-in-indonesia.aspx

Local Solutions to Poverty (LSP) - $191.5 million, 2008-2020
The World Bank-managed LSP Multi-Donor Trust Fund is used to fund analytical and advisory support to help the Indonesian Government to reduce poverty and inequality through improvements to basic service delivery. Through this program we engage with central and sub-national governments, village communities and frontline service providers on a wide range of projects. From 2008 to 2014, LSP was a multi-donor trust fund known as the PNPM Support Facility (PSF). The PSF supported Indonesia's National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM), which was Indonesia's flagship community-driven development (CDD) program, and one of the most successful CDD projects in the world.

In January 2014, PNPM was mainstreamed into government systems under the national Law on Village Development. PSF became LSP and is now focused on supporting GOI to improve the quality of life of poor and vulnerable Indonesians through locally-led innovations under Indonesia's decentralised framework of governance and basic service delivery. These include activities such as Generasi Cerdas Sehat (Healthy and Smart Generation), analytical support to village governance reform, and pilots in village level economic development, teacher performance and accountability (KIAT Guru) and early childhood education and development.

Program Peduli - $30.9 million, 2014-2018
Peduli is an Australian-Indonesian Government partnership managed by the Asia Foundation (TAF) with broad direction and engagement from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (Kemenko PMK). The Program is implemented through a network of 74 Indonesian civil society organisations in 66 districts across 21 provinces.

Through Peduli we are promoting social inclusion to reduce poverty among marginalised people in Indonesia. This includes efforts to increase access to public services and social assistance, increase social acceptance, protect human rights and improve government policies on social inclusion. The program focuses on six of Indonesia's most marginalised groups: vulnerable children and youth; remote indigenous communities reliant on natural resources; religious minorities; victims of human rights violations; male-to-female transgender (waria); and people with disabilities.

Since commencing in April 2014, Peduli has assisted over 35,000 beneficiaries, and has strengthened inclusive government through dialogue and policy reforms. The program promotes broader public awareness through specific and targeted media to help build a more positive profile of these marginalised groups that have traditionally experienced negative stereotyping from the mainstream media and public.

Towards a Strong and Prosperous Indonesian Society (MAHKOTA Indonesia) - $62 million 2016-2019

MAHKOTA supports the Indonesian Vice President's National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction. MAHKOTA's objectives are to help enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of existing social protection programs, and to help Indonesia advance its agenda for developing a comprehensive social protection framework. We do this by:
- generating evidence to inform social assistance policies;
- defining policy options and translate policy choices into programs;
- providing technical assistance;
- providing high-quality monitoring and evaluation.

Our work under MAHKOTA builds on the success of the Poverty Reduction Support Facility, which helped the Indonesian Government build a unified database covering 97 million individuals, constituting the poorest 40 per cent of Indonesia's population. This database has helped Indonesia's largest social assistance programs to reach and support more effectively the poorest 25 per cent of the population. In 2017, this data was used to help Indonesia restrict the number of households with subsidized electricity to the poorest 40 per cent. The Indonesian Government has estimated this will save up to $1.6 billion in 2017. MAHKOTA is also supporting the Vice President's National Team to reform Indonesia's subsidised rice program, and leading a coordinated effort to reduce stunting in 100 districts.

8. **Please provide information to what extent the project(s) has/have improved access to water, sanitation, electricity and other services, including availability and costs of the residents of the respective informal settlements.**

9. **To what extend have the programmes or policies improved the security of the residences of informal settlements, both their physical and legal security, for example better protection against violence, including violence against women, reduction of crime, or improved security of tenure of the residents?**

10. **Can you describe if and how the respective projects and programmes have involved the participation of the residents living in the informal settlement in decision making, in project design and its implementation?**

11. Please provide information about successful upgrading or resettlement projects or experiences that could provide good practices elsewhere.

We are unable to provide disaggregated analysis at this time because our assistance to informal settlements is often mainstreamed across larger projects, including around urbanisation, service delivery and law and justice reforms.

12. What challenges has your agency faced when implementing such projects or programmes? Could you kindly share lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful projects or approaches.

Inequalities within countries remain serious challenges. In 2014, the Asia-Pacific was home to 55 per cent of the world's urban population as well as the world's largest urban slum populations and the highest concentration of people living below the poverty line. Urban populations in Asia are expected to triple by 2050. In much of the Pacific region, economic growth is not keeping pace with population growth and rapid urbanisation is adding to this challenge, particularly in Melanesian countries. Around 30 per cent of Vanuatu's population are already living in the city and its fringes. The Solomon Islands urban population is expected to reach as much as 350,000 by 2050, representing an increase of 250,000. Papua New Guinea's urban population is expected to double to 2 million people by 2030.

The speed and scale of urban population growth is a challenge to Australia's partners in the region. Physical, economic and social changes are placing pressure on partner governments to plan, manage and finance urban development. Urban poverty has a particularly severe impact on women and girls, due to lack of access to basic services, adequate shelter, sanitation and water, lack of protection and security, and increased vulnerability to violence and abuse. The safety of, and opportunities for, women require specific interventions to ensure a safe environment and to provide opportunities for their meaningful participation in urban development activities. This remains a challenge. For example, an evaluation of Australia's Indonesia Infrastructure Initiative found that while the program had achieved notable results, there were shortcomings in the program's contributions to gender and social inclusion.

Climate change has the potential to significantly impact on development in the region. The Indo-Pacific region is also one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Governments and donors, including Australia, need to be vigilant in ensuring that people with disabilities, including in informal settlements, are not inadvertently excluded from disaster relief assistance. For example, a 2017 evaluation of the effectiveness of Australia's response to Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu found that some people living with a disability in urban communities were left off the distribution lists for disaster relief assistance.

Australia is supporting partner countries to leverage their own resources to generate growth and to distribute those benefits to urban, peri-urban and rural populations. We will make concerted efforts to ensure that the poor and marginalised, including women, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities, are benefitting from our investments.