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YOUNG AUSSIE TO CATAPULT EXTREME POVERTY ONTO POLITICAL AGENDA

Young Australian humanitarian Hugh Evans, will lead the fight against extreme poverty, with the launch of the “Global Poverty Project” on Friday at a landmark meeting of the United Nations in New York.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and other world leaders will gather at the UN meeting to discuss the international community’s progress toward alleviated extreme poverty and Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith will be present at the launch to support the Global Poverty Project.

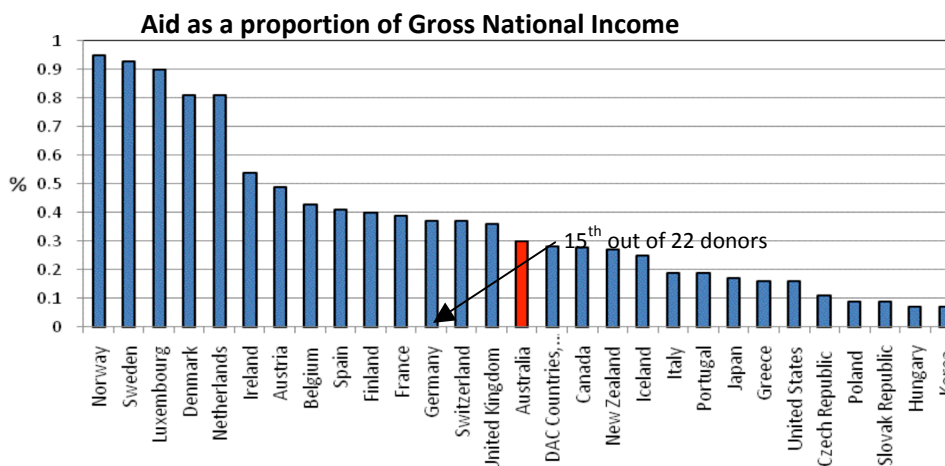
Twenty-five year-old Evans, the 2004 Young Australian of the Year, said today the Global Poverty Project is inspired by Al Gore’s climate change campaign, and will include a feature documentary to catalyse grassroots action (see trailer - <http://files.theconscience.org/ftp/flinks/gpp/gpp.html>).

“The campaign to end extreme poverty has lost momentum, partly because of the focus on climate change, yet sadly there are still more than one billion people living on less than a dollar a day,” Evans explained.

“At the rate we’re going, we will fail to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals that we set in order to halve extreme poverty by 2015. To put that in human terms, if we fail to meet the aid target of 0.7% it could mean the lives of 200,000 children in our region,” he said.

At Friday’s landmark UN meeting, Mr Rudd and other world leaders will be told that at the half way point to the target date of 2015, the world’s richest countries – the G8 – have only delivered 14% of their promised aid increase and debt forgiveness has slowed significantly.

“Australia is making progress with bipartisan support for a commitment to 0.5% of GNI in foreign aid by 2015, but we’ve got plenty of ground to make up from past neglect and we still only rate 15th out of 22 world aid donors,” said Evans.



“The Global Poverty Project aims to inspire everyday people and in particular the media to act – applying the blowtorch to our political leaders – because without that pressure it’s too easy for world leaders to sit on their hands.

Salil Shetty, the Director of the UN Millennium Campaign, who will co-launch the Global Poverty Project, said the project had the UN’s strong support.

“Through the Global Poverty Project, youth from around the world will be sending a clear message to world leaders that, as the first generation that can end poverty, they refuse to miss this opportunity,” he said.

“Now, it’s up to governments to heed these demands to deliver on their promises to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The youth of the world are watching, and they won’t allow inaction.”

Evans said that Al Gore’s climate change campaign had been an inspiration in developing the Global Poverty Project.

“We’ve seen what popular grassroots action can do with the issue of climate change and Al Gore’s film *An Inconvenient Truth* and we want to place similar pressure on our politicians to deal with the equally important issue of extreme poverty,” he said.

He explained that the Global Poverty Project is definitely not just another feel good exercise and that the project has three very specific goals:

- Raise developed countries’ contribution to world aid to 0.7% of GDP;
- The revival of multilateral trade negotiations and the willingness of the US to participate in these; and
- The developed world to write off third world debt, which cripples their development.

Ends

The UN meeting on the Millennium Development Goals will be held on Thursday 25 September in New York - <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/index.shtml>

The Global Poverty Project launch will take place on Thursday 25 September @ 2:00pm, One United Nations Plaza at 44 Street between First and Second Ave.

See the following trailer for more details about the feature presentation that is the centrepiece of the Global Poverty Project: <http://files.theconscience.org/ftp/flinks/gpp/gpp.html>

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