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**THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY – AUSTRALIA**

Introduction

The National Disaster Centre has been asked to be part of round table discussion on Australian International Development Policy. The Centre contributed its views and comments by going through the seven (7) guiding questions as stated below:

1. Stakeholders are invited to consider and comment on the following key questions:

1.1 What key trends or challenges will shape Australia’s engagement in our region and globally over the next five to 10 years? What risks and opportunities does this present for Australia’s development assistance?

 1.1.1 Trend or challenges:

 1.1.1.1 Geopolitics - Geopolitics of the region may affect

Australia’s engagement within the region. Now than before, there are number of players that want to engagement with PNG and the region. Hence Australia should step up and maintain its position as a prominent regional player in areas including politics, economics, security, technological, environmental and legal. Australia should stand firm as the traditional power in the Pacific to take lead with the developmental issues of the region.

1.1.1.2 Security - Unconventional security in areas of disasters and climate change may also affect the manner Australia engages with PNG and the region. As PNG sits on the so called *ring of fire* and compounded with effects of climate change, there may be policy shift in areas of priorities, resources and funding to assist small island states (SIDs) in the Pacific Region including PNG.

1.1.1.3 Infrastructure - PNG in particular is a developing country with many parts of the country so remote and rugged in nature. Building of transport infrastructure such as roads, bridges airfields; etc, and institutional infrastructure for health and education can also be the challenge of good policies. The construction of infrastructure to cater of disaster risk management such as office space, warehouses to store stocks to respond to disasters, early warning systems; etc in the region would be a good policy for Australia.

 1.1.3 Risks and opportunities:

1.1.3.1 Leadership - Australia as a developed middle power nation with properly established systems should exercise its leadership role and guide proper development policies to assist a developing country like PNG and others in the region.

1.1.3.2 Economic - The land down under nation, the 13th largest economy with the GDP of over US$1.3 trillion has a lot potential at its disposal to meaningfully direct policies to be created to assist the region and PNG’s development agendas.

1.2 What development capabilities will Australia need to respond to these challenges?

 1.2.1 Economic Capabilities:

1.2.1.1 Australia has an economy with prominent financial position to sustain good policies of development to assist with PNG and the region’s development and growth aspirations. Australia can do more than what it is doing at the moment to assist SIDs in the Pacific.

 1.2.2 Defence Capabilities

1.2.2.1 Australia through ADF has Defence Capabilities through it naval, air and land platforms may continue to support PNG and the region in times of disasters in the country and the region which is very much appreciated.

 1.2.3 Leadership Capabilities:

1.2.3.1 It has strong leadership in terms of different expertise to influence and direct any development policies in PNG and the region. Be it in areas of finance, manpower expertise, education, health, defence; etc to draw from to draft better policies to assist countries in the region.

1.3 How can Australia best utilize its national strengths to enhance the impact of our development program and address multidimensional vulnerabilities?

 1.3.1 Work in partnership in recipient country agencies:

1.3.1.1 Listen and work within the recipient country’s development priorities, policies and goals. Australian support should be to enhance recipient country’s efforts and not to replace as they know their priorities. Most efforts have to be guided toward achieving tangible outcomes such as development and redevelopment of infrastructure.

1.3.2 Support regional countries policy and programs:

1.3.1.1 Study the gaps in local or indigenous policies and programs and fill them with resources and expertise where there are lapses. There will be multidimensional vulnerabilities, but one need to see the priorities of the recipient nation and assist where a nation’s immediate needs arise first.

1.4 How should the new policy reflect the Government’s commitments to build stronger and more meaningful partnerships in our region, founded on mutual trust and respect and shared values of fairness and equality?

 1.4.1 Work in partnership with recipient country development programs:

1.4.1.1 Work in partnership and listen to each other. As stated earlier, recipient nation’s priorities be respected and work according to their policies, plans and goals.

 1.4.2 No tied aid assistance:

1.4.2.1 If tied aid still exists, relax it to allow flexibility for the recipient nation the freedom to make decisions to spend funds based on its priorities. In that way there should be interest and enthusiasm to implement the policies by the donor and recipient nations.

 1.4.3 Include training and mentoring package as well:

1.4.3.1 Through identification of gaps of training of manpower and mentoring is needed, include that as well to encourage consistency and continuation of programs. This action participation by all parties.

1.5 What lessons from Australia’s past development efforts should inform the policy? What is Australia seen to be doing comparatively well?

 1.5.1 Remove tied aid and has an open card:

1.5.1.1 Discuss with aid recipient agencies of government to see if the programs are consistent with recipient nation’s programs: if they are applauded, praised and accepted; then keep them. Those programs with resentments should be reviewed immediately.

 1.5.2 Assisting with recipient countries development programs including security and infrastructure:

1.5.2.1 The major issues one can imagine are security and infrastructure development in the country (PNG). They are two of the big challenges in the country and the region which Australia needs to maintain and increase in scope.

1.6 How should the performance and delivery systems be designed to promote transparency and accountability, as well as effectiveness and learning in Australia’s development assistance?

 1.6.1 Encourage joint or partnership arrangements:

1.6.1.1 As stated earlier, encourage working in partnership with each other (donor and recipient nations) and build trust and confidence amongst both parties.

 1.6.2 Encourage training and mentoring arrangements:

1.6.2.1 Use of training programs and mentoring arrangements would be a good way to maintain continuity, and help build trust and confidence between the parties particularly for the recipient nation. When people are involved always invest in the long term benefits as well through application of training and mentoring activities.

1.7 How should the new policy address the role of ODA and non-ODA in supporting the development of our regional partners?

 1.7.1 Use of ODA and non ODA funds:

1.7.1.1 The new policy should not affect the ODA in any way. The policy to use Official Development Assistance funds in particular for the development should continue from old policy to new policy which should be reviewed. As mentioned earlier, if the gaps in the old policy has been identified and are corrected together collectively by the donor and recipient as agreed by both parties, there should be no major issue surrounding the use of ODA. ODA does not include military assistance expenditure, hence, that can be looked at separately, perhaps with new arrangement.

1.7.1.2 With non ODA funds as it is raised separately for development, policy may differ from ODA policy. Both ODA and non ODA are for development purpose, hence, they should be articulated properly and collectively by the donor and the recipient with less or no ambiguities.

**Summary**

2. The new International Development Policy should be drafted to ensure it will take care of the needs of both parties including the donor and the recipient nations. It is suggested that the gaps in the old policy (audit the old policy) can be identified and analysed before drafting the new one.

3. In the new policy there should be more effort in two (2) areas of security and infrastructure sectors. Under the security sector, there should be focus on non-conventional security issues such as natural disasters and climate change induced effects in the region. The policy should also focus on providing funding support to all phases of disaster risk management including mitigation, preparation, response and recovery efforts. Funding in disaster related infrastructure such as warehouse, early warning systems; etc should be a priority.

4. The bigger agenda where the new policy should pick up is the transport infrastructure in the country. That should include roads, bridges, airfields, jetties, wharves; etc and institutional infrastructure for education and health departments and others. Both the security and infrastructure sectors activities should be implemented in partnership by the donor and recipient nations.

5. All the best with the policy.

(Original signed)

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**Colonel**

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