**Speech Notes Labor**

**Micah Australia’s Voices for Justice**

* A gathering of two hundred Christians, from every denomination from across the country gathered here in Canberra to speak up for the extreme poor, enslaved and displaced.

**Poverty – A Story of Progress**

* The world’s nations have been making tremendous progress in the fight against extreme poverty.
* Between 1990 and 2015[[1]](#footnote-1):
  + The level of extreme income poverty fell by three quarters, from 39% of the world’s population to 10%.
  + Child mortality fell from 12.6 million to 5.4 million annually. In every day terms, this means 19,000 fewer children die before the age of five.
  + The number of people with access to clean water increased by 1.9 billion

**Australian Aid Has been Contributing**

* Our aid program has made a significant contribution to these gains.
* In just one year, Australian aid helped to vaccinate 2.2 million children, give 2.2 million more people access to safe drinking water and help 2.5 million children in Afghanistan enrol in school.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Australia’s top 5 largest aid recipients—Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Timor-Leste—reduced child mortality by an average of 58% since 1990.
* Since 1990, the Under-5 Mortality Rate in Timor Leste has fallen from around 1 in 6 children to 1 in 20 children[[3]](#footnote-3)—a reduction of more than 70%. Australian aid has had a significant part to play in that story.

**Unprecedented Humanitarian Need**

* Despite this progress, conflict, climate change and oppressive governments have seen the world plunged into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.
* The civil wars in Syria and Yemen, the oppression of the Rohingya by Myanmar, and natural disasters and the impacts of climate change have led to 133.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, 68.5 million people being displaced, and—for the first time in decades—a rise in people suffering from hunger and severe and acute malnutrition.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**While the world’s nations have been stepping up, Australia has been stepping back**

* Global aid is now at an all-time high. At $US146.6 billion, it is twice what it was in 1990.
* However, while global aid giving has increased, Australia’s aid generosity has fallen to its lowest level since the aid program began.
* Australian aid generosity is languishing at just 0.23% of our gross national income (GNI) and is budgeted to keep falling further to just 0.19%.
* Australia now ranks 19th among the 28 members of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee.
* Australian’s are the wealthiest people on the planet, when measured by median wealth.[[5]](#footnote-5) We are the only country in the world that has experienced 27 years of uninterrupted economic growth. Our budget is set to return to surplus, and at 19% net debt to GDP, we have one of the lowest levels of public debt among all aid-giving nations.
* Australia can and should be a leader on aid generosity, and at the very least, return to the top half of the ranking of aid donor nations by the end of the next parliamentary term.

1. Multiple Sources: World Bank (<https://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty>); UNICEF, *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality, Report 2018*; World Health Organisation and UNICEF, *Joint Monitoring Report, 2017* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DFAT. *Performance of Australian Aid – 2014-2015.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2017-18 Budget Papers; and UNICEF, *Levels and Trends In Child Mortality Report 2018.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UNOCHA *2018 Humanitarian Funding Update,* UNHCR, World Food Program [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Credit Suisse. *Global Wealth Report 2018.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)