

## CARING FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE – POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### Position:

- FAMILY FIRST is conscious that 825 million people suffer from chronic hunger, more than 10 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2004 and more than a billion people do not have access to safe water. The World Health Organisation estimates that two of the biggest killers, malaria and tuberculosis, account for three million deaths each year. Both diseases are preventable and treatable;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned that more than half a million women in the Third World die every single year because of complications in pregnancy and childbirth. That is one death each minute. For every woman who dies, a further 20 are seriously injured or disabled due to complications;
- FAMILY FIRST believes it is important that governments make significant commitments to international aid to tackle these basic development issues;
- FAMILY FIRST believes it is even more important that all of us think carefully about what part we can play to help people in developing countries, for example by sponsoring a child;
- FAMILY FIRST supports the Millenium Development Goals as a starting point for Australia's plans to assist developing countries;
- FAMILY FIRST believes that law and order and governance programs are important parts of the aid budget. Aid funds cannot be usefully spent in communities where law and order is not established. But this needs to be balanced with the need for people on the ground to see demonstrable improvements in health, education, water supply and sanitation.

## **Actions:**

- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to increase its foreign aid spending to 0.7 per cent of gross national income by 2015;
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to commit an extra \$350 million per annum by 2010 to a special initiative to give families in developing countries access to clean water and sanitation, especially in Australia's region;
- FAMILY FIRST supports an increase in funding for basic education of \$200 million per annum by 2010;
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to place a special emphasis on maternal health, to reduce the rate of women dying during pregnancy or childbirth;
- FAMILY FIRST supports extra funding for micro-credit initiatives, so that families in developing countries can take out small loans to finance their small business and improve their lives;
- FAMILY FIRST believes the Government should report to Parliament annually on its progress towards meeting the Millenium Development Goals;
- FAMILY FIRST strongly opposes diverting scarce foreign aid funds to abortion-related activities, which would take money from poverty alleviation and development.