

## Australia joins the Global Fund

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Australia will contribute \$25 million, over the next three years, to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the foreign minister, Alexander Downer, announced on 18 February.

Concerns over the organisation's perceived Africa-centric focus and its ability to roll-out large scale programs had previously made the Australian government hesitant about supporting the Global Fund.

The funding commitment comes on top of an existing six year, \$200 million HIV/AIDS initiative launched in 2000.

The executive director of the Global Fund, Richard Feachem, welcomed the announcement, saying that Australia's reputation as a leader in fighting HIV/AIDS would encourage other countries to join the fund.

But the developed world has still not come to terms with the enormity of the AIDS pandemic, Mr Feachem warned.

"If you look at the world today we are losing the battle rapidly," he told a press conference in Canberra. "What the Global Fund is doing is financing the beginnings of a huge counter attack, but this huge counter attack is only just beginning to roll out."

Since the Global Fund was set up after the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on AIDS in June 2001, it has received pledges of over US\$5 billion from governments and non-government organisations around the world.

- [The Global Fund](#)