

**DÓCHAS**  
*The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations*

**PRESS RELEASE**

06 October 2009

**Don't use aid to pay for climate damage,  
say Development NGOs**

Irish development NGOs today called on the Minister for the Environment to stand up for climate justice. Dóchas, the Irish umbrella group of overseas development agencies, urged John Gormley to actively ensure that poor countries are not forced to pay for climate damage from the overseas aid they receive from rich countries like Ireland.

*“Minister Gormley has spoken in favour of ensuring that aid is not used to pay for climate damage. The government needs to ensure that it is making its voice heard on this issue. Now is the time for Ireland to stand up and be counted,”* said Hans Zomer, director of Dóchas.

With less than three months to go before crucial climate change negotiations in Copenhagen, the European Union is engaged in intensive internal debate on its position for the climate talks. At stake is how rich countries ensure that sufficient finance is available in developing countries for low-carbon development as well as for the adaptation needed to cope with the destruction caused by climate change.

*“It's up to rich countries to deliver the much needed support to poor countries to adapt to climate change. We cannot and should not ask them to pay for the climate pollution we have caused”,* Mr Zomer continued.

Shockingly, it has been suggested that funding for adaptation could come from Official Development Assistance, or overseas aid. This is despite the Bali Action Plan, the basis for the current climate talks (agreed in Bali in December 2007), specifying that funding for adaptation and mitigation should be “new and additional”.

Minister for the Environment John Gormley has supported the principle of ‘additionality’ in public statements. But EU discussions on this issue are now taking place ahead of a crucial Environment Minister meeting in October and now is the time for the Irish government to demonstrate its principles through action.

*“People living in poverty urgently need countries like Ireland to ensure that they are not asked to pay for climate destruction. Ireland should speak up today,” said Mr. Zomer’*

A recent report from Dóchas member, Oxfam, called *Beyond Aid*, warns that at least 75 million fewer children are likely to attend school and 8.6 million fewer people could have access to HIV and AIDS treatments if aid is diverted to help poor countries tackle climate change.

*“The Irish government must show that it is not content to stand by and watch a reversal of recent successes in combating poverty, such as an increase in the number of children attending school and, mothers surviving childbirth,” Mr Zomer said.*

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Dóchas ([www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie)) is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 44 members, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

**Dóchas Member Agencies**

1. ActionAid Ireland
2. Action from Ireland
3. Africa Centre
4. Aidlink
5. Amnesty International-Irish Section
6. Bóthar
7. Camara
8. Centre for Global Education
9. ChildFund Ireland
10. Children in Crossfire
11. Christian Aid Ireland
12. Christian Blind Mission Ireland
13. Church Mission Society Ireland
14. Comhlámh
15. Concern Worldwide
16. Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
17. Galway One World Centre
18. Gorta
19. International Service Ireland
20. Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation
21. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs
22. Irish Council for International Students
23. Irish Family Planning Association

24. Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development
25. Irish Missionary Union
26. Irish Red Cross
27. Kerry Action for Development Education
28. National Youth Council of Ireland
29. Oxfam Ireland
30. Plan Ireland
31. Progressio Ireland
32. Self Help Africa
33. SightSavers International
34. Skillshare International Ireland
35. Suas Educational Development
36. The Hope Foundation
37. Trócaire
38. Vita
39. Voluntary Service International
40. Voluntary Service Overseas
41. Volunteer Missionary Movement
42. War on Want Northern Ireland
43. Wingspread International
44. World Vision Ireland