

PRESS STATEMENT

14 October 2008

Development NGOs' Response to Budget 2009:

Government cuts overseas aid, but remains on track to meet Ireland's promises to the world's poor

In response to Finance Minister Brian Lenihan's budget speech, Dóchas - the umbrella group of Ireland's Development NGOs – said it welcomed the government's continued commitment to the international fight against poverty.

"The government has shown today that it intends to remain true to its promise to the world's poorest, by staying on track towards the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income on overseas aid by 2012," said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, which unites 39 Irish aid agencies and Development NGOs.

"The cut in Ireland's overseas aid budget means that many important development initiatives will not be undertaken. However, at a time when Ireland's finances are facing new challenges, as a country we have remembered that others are facing far worse crises, and that we have a duty to assist those in need wherever they are" stated Zomer.

Last month, a UN summit reminded the world that the need for ambitious and concrete action to eradicate poverty is greater than ever, and that the investments by the international community to bring about a series of goals to eradicate poverty by 2015 must not falter. At that summit, an Taoiseach Brian Cowen reiterated Ireland's commitment to the fight against poverty and injustice.

Department of Finance figures show that Ireland will spend 0.56% of national income on overseas aid in 2009, which suggests that we remain on track to reaching the 0.7% by 2012 target.

"Ireland's overseas aid spending is making a real difference in reducing poverty and inequality in some of the world's poorest countries – a goal shared by over 850,000 people who support Dóchas member aid agencies. With Ireland's assistance, thousands of people have access to

schools, health services or HIV drugs; thousands more have access to humanitarian assistance in disaster situations” concluded Hans Zomer.

[ENDS]

The Dóchas Budget Submission, presented in September, is available at http://www.dochas.ie/documents/Budget_Submission2008.pdf

CONTACTS

Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, Tel. 085-728 3258

Éamonn Casey, Dóchas Policy Officer, Tel. 087-950 6222

Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 39 members, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

Dóchas Member Agencies

1. ActionAid Ireland
2. Action from Ireland
3. Aidlink
4. Amnesty International-Irish Section
5. Bóthar
6. Centre for Global Education
7. ChildFund Ireland
8. Children in Crossfire
9. Christian Aid Ireland
10. Church Mission Society Ireland
11. Comhlámh
12. Concern Worldwide
13. Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
14. Galway One World Centre

15. Gorta
16. International Service Ireland
17. Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation
18. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs
19. Irish Council for International Students
20. Irish Family Planning Association
21. Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development
22. Irish Missionary Union
23. Irish Red Cross
24. Kerry Action for Development Education
25. National Youth Council of Ireland
26. Oxfam Ireland
27. Plan Ireland
28. Self Help Africa
29. Skillshare International Ireland
30. Suas Educational Development
31. The Hope Foundation
32. Trócaire
33. Vita
34. Voluntary Service International
35. Voluntary Service Overseas
36. Volunteer Missionary Movement
37. War on Want Northern Ireland
38. Wingspread International
39. World Vision Ireland