

DÓCHAS
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

09 December 2009

PRESS RELEASE

Reaction to 2010 Budget

Aid agencies: Government continues to cut aid to world's poorest people

In response to Finance Minister Brian Lenihan's Budget speech, Dóchas - the umbrella group of Ireland's Development NGOs – expressed disappointment at the Government's decision to cut the overseas aid budget even further.

“Once again, the poorest people on earth have been hit hard. Today's announcement of €25 million worth of cuts to the aid budget comes on top of a massive 24% cut in 2009 – cuts that have meant severe hardship for countless poor people”, said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, which unites 44 Irish aid agencies and Development NGOs”

“It is time we recognise that the world's poorest people cannot afford further cuts” added Zomer.

The aid agencies commented that Ireland's credibility abroad was dented severely by the second failure to achieve the aid target date.

“Twice we promised ‘solemnly’ to achieve the UN 0.7% target, and twice we have failed to achieve it by the date we set for ourselves. It does raise serious questions about the credibility of this new aid promise. At a minimum, to restore credibility, the Government needs to copperfasten this commitment in legislation, and announce real and practical steps to restore the aid programme” said Hans Zomer on behalf of the 44 members of Dóchas.

“We will be seeking an urgent meeting with Minister Power, to seek clarification about the government's commitment to its international obligations, as we do not want Ireland to renege on its promises to the poorest people on earth”, added Zomer.

ENDS

Contact:

Hans Zomer, Dóchas Director, tel. 085 728 3258 / 01 405 3801

Notes for the Editor:

- The 2009 budget for overseas aid was €696 million, down 24% (€224 million) from the previous year.
- The 2010 budget for overseas aid works out as €671 million.
- At the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005, then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern committed Ireland to reaching the UN target of spending 0.7% of our GNP on overseas aid by 2012 at the latest.
- The Government set interim targets “against which our progress towards the target can be measured”.
 - The interim **target set for 2010 was 0.6% of GNI.**
 - Today’s announcement of a cut of €25million means that **Ireland’s aid effort works out at around 0.52%**, well short of the target set by the Government.
- Due to the earlier cuts, Ireland’s aid expenditure for 2009 is predicted to fall well short of the target and reach only 0.52% of GNI.

For further information, see www.dochas.ie

Dóchas 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. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

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