

DOCHAS
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

PRESS RELEASE

1 December 2011

World AIDS Day

Development NGOs: “Aid works – The world is winning fight against HIV and AIDS”

As commemorations for World AIDS Day 2011 begin, members of Dochas, the umbrella group of Irish Development NGOs, welcome significant progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS over the past 30 years. NGOs acknowledge that better prevention programmes, improved drugs, and wider access to treatment have contributed to major advances in combating the disease.

Irish NGOs recall that continued investment is key in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Overseas aid works and makes significant impact on the lives of the world’s poor and vulnerable.

*“Ten years ago, leaders of the world met at the UN and promised to provide universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services by 2010. It is thanks to continued effort and leadership demonstrated in countries affected by the HIV pandemic and sustained investment by aid donors, including **Ireland** since then - that we are now able to point to significant decreases in infection and mortality rates. A clear example of how aid does, in fact, save lives,”* stated Dr. Enida Friel, Chair of Dochas HIV and AIDS Working Group.

Humanity is winning against AIDS but we cannot give up now. If we stop investing in the fight against HIV and AIDS, we will be losing the fight, said Dr. Friel.

While the White Paper on Irish Aid is being reviewed, Dochas also calls on the Irish government to reaffirm its commitments in relation to HIV and AIDS.

“Ireland’s leadership and commitment to HIV and AIDS has been internationally recognised. In the lead up to a review of the White Paper on Irish Aid we call on our government to maintain its strategic focus on HIV and AIDS. This will ensure that promises made to those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS in the poorest countries in the world such as to spend €100 million per year on HIV and other communicable diseases with 20% of it being allocated to children are kept, Dr Friel concluded.

Earlier this year world leaders gathered at a United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting (HLM) on AIDS in New York to review the progress made. The Irish government reported there to have spent €695 million on HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases in the past five years (2006-2010).

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

1. World AIDS Day is commemorated every year on 1st December to highlight the challenges and consequences of the global AIDS epidemic. For information on World AIDS Day commemorations taking place in Ireland please go to <http://globalhealth.ie/index.php?i=210>
2. According to UNAIDS since 1981 when the first cases of AIDS were diagnosed, over 60 million people have been infected with HIV and half of them have already died of AIDS. While the number of new infections has dropped significantly and access to treatment has improved in many low and middle income countries, more than half of those needing treatment still cannot access it. Despite progress, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most affected by HIV and AIDS. Full UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2011 can be found at http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2216_WorldAIDSday_report_2011_en.pdf
3. **Dochas** is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 43 member organisations, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues. More information at www.dochas.ie

DOCHAS MEMBERS

A-Z Children's Charity - ActionAid Ireland - Afri - Africa Centre - Aidlink - Alan Kerins Projects - Amnesty International Ireland - Camara Education - Centre for Global Education - ChildFund Ireland - Children in Crossfire - Christian Aid Ireland - Christian Blind Mission Ireland - Comhlámh - Concern Worldwide - Friends of Londiani (Ireland) - Galway One World Centre - Gorta - Habitat for Humanity Ireland - Irish League of Credit Unions International Development Foundation (ILCU/IDF) - Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) - Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) - Irish Missionary Union (IMU) - Irish Red Cross (IRC) - Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE) - National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) - Oxfam Ireland - Plan Ireland - Progressio Ireland - Self Help Africa - Sightsavers International Ireland - Skillshare International Ireland - Suas Educational Development - Tearfund Ireland - The Hope Foundation - The National Council of Ireland YMCA Trust - Trócaire - Vita - Voluntary Service International (VSI) - Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland) - Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) - War on Want Northern Ireland - World Vision Ireland.

