

DÓCHAS
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

P R E S S R E L E A S E

22 May 2008

Ireland makes progress on aid figures: NGOs call for pressure on EU laggards

As newly appointed Minister of State for Overseas Development Peter Power travels to Brussels to represent Ireland at an EU Council of Ministers meeting on development issues, Irish NGOs have encouraged him to urge his European colleague to improve their performance on aid.

Dóchas and its 39 member aid agencies today called on the Government to lead the EU on development aid. While Ireland has made good progress towards meeting its commitment of spending at least the UN 0.7% target of its Gross National Income on aid from 2012, many other EU countries are not on the right track to deliver on their promises.

“In 2005, European governments promised with great fanfare to increase overseas aid. The targets they set themselves are being missed, and the need to step up international aid is becoming more and more urgent.”

On May 26-27, European development Ministers will meet to discuss the EU’s relations with developing countries. Ahead of this key meeting, NGOs from all 27 EU countries today launched a new report *“No Time to Waste: European governments behind schedule on aid quality and quantity”*. This report gives a detailed account of how European aid money is still failing to meet its poverty reduction targets, and provides a reminder of what needs to be done to get back on track. European governments are not meeting their commitments and with this report, NGOs are urging them to be accountable to their citizens and those in developing countries.

For their part, Irish NGOs are moving ahead on measures to improve their impact and accountability. At the end of April, they approved a code of practice regulating NGO internal and external accountability.

Helen Keogh, Chairperson of Dóchas, said:

“The work of Irish aid agencies is supported by over 850,000 people. All our stakeholders deserve the highest standards of transparency in the workings of charities so that they can see how their donations are being used. All our supporters expect charities to be properly managed and governed by an effective board to best practice standards”

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Notes for editors:

- The European Aid Watch Report is launched today. It is available at http://www.dochas.ie/documents/Aidwatch2008_NoTimeToWaste.pdf

- **CONCORD** is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'. www.concordeurope.org

- The Member States of the European Union, together with the European Commission, provide over half of the world's official development assistance, and have taken the lead in pledging to increase this further. The **latest aid figures** - released by the OECD in April - show, however, that many countries are not yet pulling their weight and that the Union is not on track to meet its own aid targets. (See Dóchas statement: <http://www.dochas.ie/documents/DochasstatementOECDaidfigures.pdf>)

- **EU commitments:** In 2002, the EU15 committed to give at least 0.33% of GNI as aid by 2006 (with an average of 0.39%) and 0.7% by 2015. In 2005, they committed to give 0.51% at least by 2010 (with an average of 0.56%) The 12 New member States committed to give 0.17% of GNI as aid by 2010 and 0.33% by 2015.

Ireland's commitment exceeds that of the EU Member States generally, with Ireland having committed to achieving 0.5% in 2007, 0.6% in 2010 and 0.7% in 2012.

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