

DÓCHAS
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

PRESS RELEASE

15 March 2010

Irish NGOs call for greater investment in the fight against poverty

United Nations: “aid to poor countries is a matter of justice, not charity”

Ireland’s aid agencies today welcomed a new report by the United Nations that states that real progress is being made in the global fight against poverty, but that the failure of rich countries to honour their aid promises is a major obstacle.

Commenting on the report, Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, the umbrella organisation of Ireland’s overseas development organisations, stated:

“At the beginning of this century, world leaders agreed to eradicate the worst forms of poverty within one generation. They agreed a set of action points, the “Millennium Development Goals”, that would see poverty made history.”

“This report shows that the world has made significant progress in consigning poverty to the history books. But it also notes that the promises by rich countries to increase their aid budgets have not materialised, and that this ‘lack of adequate and predictable international financing has been an important constraint’ in the fight against poverty,” said Zomer.

The UN report, which will be presented by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon at an informal meeting of the plenary tomorrow (16 March), notes that “achievement of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] remains feasible with adequate commitment, policies, resources and effort. The Millennium Declaration represents the most important collective promise ever made to the world’s most vulnerable people. This promise is not based on pity or charity, but on solidarity, justice and the recognition that we are increasingly dependent on one another for our shared prosperity and security.”

“In six months’ time, the Taoiseach will travel to New York for a UN meeting to review the implementation of the MDGs - it is essential that Ireland can be counted among those countries that kept their promises to the world’s poorest people. We promised the world that no-one would be left behind, and we must stand to account for our efforts” said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas.

The UN report provides information on progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through a comprehensive review of successes and lessons learned. It lists obstacles and opportunities for world leaders, and suggests concrete strategies for action.

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

1. The report, "Keeping the promise: Forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015", is available at:
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/665
2. In September 2000, world leaders agreed a set of goals for the international community, to bring about a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. These goals were based on agreements and resolutions of world conferences organised by the United Nations in the 1990s. The goals are commonly accepted as a framework for measuring "development" progress, and are called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): see
<http://www.dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=34>
3. As part of its contribution to the achievement of the MDGs, Ireland promised to increase its overseas aid budget, so that we would reach the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income on Official Development Assistance.
4. The date for the achievement of this target has shifted twice: In 2000, then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern set a date of 2007, which was later revised to 2012. In December 2009, the Government announced the date would be moved to "2015 at the latest", but to date, the Government has not published a time-table or strategy for the achievement of this latest target date.

Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 43 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. World Vision Ireland