

PRESS STATEMENT

25 July 2008

Irish NGOs welcome Public Accounts report on aid effectiveness

Irish overseas development NGOs today welcomed this week's interim report on Irish Aid, noting that the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee had clearly underlined that aid from Ireland is making a meaningful difference to the lives of people in developing countries, and especially in Africa.

"It's only right that the Public Accounts Committee should evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of aid from Ireland, not only on behalf of the Irish people but to make sure that it is delivering on the ground for poor people in developing countries," said Hans Zomer, director of Dóchas, the umbrella association of Irish overseas aid agencies.

"We're pleased but not surprised to see that, after its scrutiny of Irish Aid and visiting aid programmes on the ground in Africa, the Committee is convinced of the real and important difference this is making to people's every day lives," Zomer said.

In its report, released on Tuesday, the Public Accounts Committee said it was satisfied that the structures to safeguard aid funding are in place and that Ireland is getting value for money for its aid spending.

The report showed how Irish assistance is improving people's lives in areas like women's and children's health, primary education, access to clean water, and tackling the effects of HIV & AIDS. It also pointed out how Irish support to parliamentary and civil society groups had improved public scrutiny, election monitoring and the quality of government in partner countries such as Zambia.

Dóchas was pleased that the Public Accounts Committee report could point to the effectiveness and value of Irish aid efforts, and highlight the particular merits of those Irish NGOs and missionaries who contribute to the programme.

"This confirms our experience on the ground that aid works, and underlines our consistent message that Ireland and other wealthy countries need to live up to their

commitments to the world's poor – not just in relation to aid, but also in other areas that affect them, like the current trade talks at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).”

“The Public Accounts Committee report offers a considered assessment of the challenges faced by Irish aid efforts in difficult environments, the value of what Irish aid achieves – and, overall, highlights the need for more and better aid,” Zomer concluded.

[ENDS]

CONTACT

Éamonn Casey, Policy Officer, Dóchas

Tel. 01 405 3802 / 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