

PRESS STATEMENT

21 January 2009

NGOs welcome Irish Aid focus on world hunger crisis

New strategy shows importance of tackling overseas as well as domestic issues in a globalised world

Irish aid agencies today welcomed the adoption by Irish Aid of the main recommendations of the government's Hunger Task Force, but urged that practical measures, particularly to support small farmers, should be put in place without delay.

The Irish NGO response came after a ceremony in Government Buildings at which Minister of State Peter Power presented the government's strategy to help eradicate global hunger.

"The report by the Hunger Task Force, commissioned by the government last year, highlights the unacceptable fact that one in every six people in this world goes hungry," said Hans Zomer, spokesman for Dóchas, the umbrella group of Irish aid agencies.

"Today's announcement by Irish Aid and the appointment by of Kevin Farrell as Special Envoy for Hunger is a welcome indicator that Ireland does not want to accept the scandal that is world hunger."

The government initiative comes at a time when public debate is heavily focused on crises closer to home and a time of new possibilities in the United States.

"Yesterday we witnessed the inauguration of US President Barack Obama, who reminded the world that we cannot separate our domestic challenges from those of the wider world. Ireland cannot be safe and prosperous without a world in which all people and countries have a chance of sustainable development," Zomer said.

"If the world truly wants to end world hunger, it must not rely on aid alone, nor on technical solutions to boost food production: what is required is political will to end the structures that keep people poor and hungry.

"On New Year's Day, An Taoiseach Brian Cowen reiterated Ireland's commitment to overseas development. Today, Ireland has shown that it has the will to take a lead on hunger. We welcome this sustained focus on the world's poor, and look forward to working closely with Irish Aid on this."

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Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for cooperation between its 39 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. Aidlink
4. Amnesty International-Irish Section
5. Bóthar
6. Centre for Global Education
7. ChildFund Ireland
8. Children in Crossfire
9. Christian Aid Ireland
10. Church Mission Society Ireland
11. Comhlámh
12. Concern Worldwide
13. Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
14. Galway One World Centre
15. Gorta
16. International Service Ireland
17. Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation
18. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs
19. Irish Council for International Students
20. Irish Family Planning Association
21. Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development
22. Irish Missionary Union
23. Irish Red Cross
24. Kerry Action for Development Education
25. National Youth Council of Ireland
26. Oxfam Ireland
27. Plan Ireland
28. Self Help Africa
29. Skillshare International Ireland
30. Suas Educational Development
31. The Hope Foundation
32. Trócaire
33. Vita
34. Voluntary Service International
35. Voluntary Service Overseas
36. Volunteer Missionary Movement
37. War on Want Northern Ireland
38. Wingspread International
39. World Vision Ireland