

PRESS RELEASE

Dublin, 27 November 2009

Budget Submission by Irish aid agencies: Overseas Aid cut by 24% already Aid Agencies say Ireland cannot afford to cut its aid any further.

In their pre-Budget Submission, 44 Irish development NGOs called on the Government to avoid further cuts in Ireland's overseas aid budget.

"The 2009 budget for aid to the world's poorest people has already been cut several times, and severely. The Government cut the aid budget by 24%, far in excess of cuts made to other Government Departments. Those cuts are having a direct impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people overseas, and they are severely denting Ireland's reputation as a country that keeps its promise" said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas and spokesman for the aid agencies.

"We are mindful that people in Ireland are struggling to come to terms with the economic recession and indeed with the floods that are affecting large parts of the country. And we know the Government has a lot on its plate, having to make very difficult decisions as it plans a path towards recovery. However, we are speaking out on behalf of people who have nothing on their plates – the 1 billion people who go hungry every day" said Hans Zomer.

Ireland has committed to help make world poverty history by raising its aid budget so that by 2012 we will spend at least 0.7% of Gross National Income on development cooperation.

"We are reminding the Government of its 'solemn commitment' to help poor people, and we are reminding them that people across the country and all parties in the Dáil support the increase of our overseas aid. We must not forget that other people are also suffering from the global economic and climate crises, and that they need our help now more than ever," said Hans Zomer of Dóchas.

A recent EU-commissioned opinion poll found that more than 92% of Irish respondents said it is either "important" or "very important" to help people in developing countries. Some 65% of Irish respondents said that Ireland must "exceed" or at least "honour" its aid commitments.

[ENDS]

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Notes to editors:

- The full text of the Dóchas Budget Submission is available at www.dochas.ie

- Further information is available on a dedicated website: www.wedocare.ie
- Dóchas is the umbrella organisation of Irish Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in development and relief overseas and/or development education in Ireland. Dóchas aims to provide a forum for consultation and cooperation among its 44 members as well as to help them speak with a single voice on development issues. More information at 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. Wingspread International
44. World Vision Ireland