

Dóchas Press Release

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Aid Agencies Welcome Government Commitment on Aid

**“Challenge is now to ensure Irish Aid
has the expertise to manage the programme.”**

The government’s new White Paper on Irish Aid was welcomed today by the Irish aid agencies.

The 38 member organisations of Dóchas congratulated the government, expressing their appreciation of the fact that the first ever White Paper on development cooperation provides clear guidelines for concerted action to fight the root causes of global poverty.

The government White Paper outlines the key principles behind Ireland’s overseas aid, and sets comprehensive parameters for the ways in which the government will address the challenges of global poverty, hunger, oppression and disease.

“Over the years, we have asked the government to help make poverty history and put in place three essentials of a high quality aid programme: A timeframe for achieving the 0.7% target, a ‘road map’ with guidelines for the aid programme and enhanced capacity to manage the programme effectively.” said Hans Zomer of Dóchas

“We are happy that the Government has delivered on both the timeframe and the White Paper. We will now work with them to make sure that the government has the staff and expertise to continue to make a real difference in the lives of the poorest people on earth.”

The aid agencies in Dóchas particularly praised the emphasis in the White Paper on partnership, both with developing country governments and NGOs.

“Ultimately, it is the people of developing countries that are responsible for their own development.” according to Zomer. “By focusing on Ireland’s role as a supporter of initiatives by poor country governments and citizens, the government has shown its understanding of this fundamental fact. With this White Paper, Ireland will now be in a position to redouble its efforts to provide aid, eliminate unfair trade rules and address the root causes of poverty.”

The NGOs pointed out that many of the principles and initiatives outlined in the White Paper will now need to be spelled out in greater detail.

Dóchas said that the existing policy dialogue with developing countries and NGOs will need to be strengthened to ensure that the White Paper is implemented in the best interests of the world's poorest people.

“At first glance, it would seem the White Paper has very many positive aspects. We would welcome the reaffirmation of Ireland's focus on Africa, and the priority that the White Paper attaches to eradicating hunger, conflict and diseases such as HIV/AIDS.” continued Zomer.

“Next month, the Dóchas members will meet to consider the implications of the government White Paper in full. In the mean time, we will make sure our collective experience is made available to Irish Aid, so that we can continue to build a first-class overseas aid programme.”

ENDS

Contact:

- Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas: tel 01 – 405 3801 / 085 – 728 3258
- Helen Keogh, Director of WorldVision Ireland and Chairperson of Dóchas: tel. 01 – 498 0800 / 086 – 255 3003

For further information,
see the Dóchas Submission to the White Paper consultation process:

<http://www.dochas.ie/resources03b.htm>

www.dochas.ie