

**DÓCHAS**  
**The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

17 February 2010

**OECD warns of significant aid shortfall to reach Millennium Development Goals**

**Ireland receives a stark reminder of broken promises and needs to strengthen aid commitment, say NGOs**

Commenting on an independent review of overseas aid statistics published today, Ireland's overseas development organisations have highlighted how aid shortfalls threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – and how Ireland is well off track to deliver on its own projected aid levels for 2010, even if still within EU targets.

The latest statistics from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) show that Ireland is expected to spend 0.52% of gross national income on official development assistance (ODA) in 2010, when it had projected that it would reach 0.6% this year, on its way to reaching 0.7% by 2012.

*“Ireland had set itself the ambition of being a leader on international development. By repeatedly cutting its overseas aid budget and reneging on its promise to reach the 0.7% target by 2012, Ireland broke its promises to the poorest, affecting millions of lives in developing countries”* said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's overseas aid agencies. *“What's more, we have also damaged the huge respect this country gained internationally on the basis of our world class overseas programme.”*

*“All donors, including Ireland, should acknowledge their international responsibilities and live up to their promises. It is essential that commitments are met to the full extent by all donor countries if we are to achieve the MDGs.”*

*“This September, the UN will review progress towards the MDGs, which is well off track – not least because wealthy countries have failed to deliver on their end of the bargain, in terms of financing for development,”* added Zomer.

Overall, the aid figures show an increase in real terms from 2005, five years after the MDGs were established, but a significant shortfall from what donors repeatedly confirmed they would provide. The OECD warned that “overall, aid will still fall considerably short of what was promised” and encouraged all donors, but especially European donors who support Africa, to “carry through on their development promises”.

Ireland had been well on track to achieve its aid targets until 2008, when it reached 0.59% of national income, but in 2009 slashed €224 million from the aid budget, followed by a further cut this year. As a result, Ireland is now well off its own target for this year, being back to around 0.52%. In December, the Government also gave up on its 2012 deadline – moving its commitment to the 0.7% target to 2015.

As a result, Irish NGOs have questioned the depth of the Government's international aid commitments – and called for clear measures to show it is serious about its revised ODA targets, and therefore the MDGs.

*“We have seen Government U-turns on Ireland's overseas aid commitments in 2005 and 2009. Ireland's latest aid promise needs to be credible. We need guarantees that the government will not break its pledge again.”*

*“To repair its reputation and restore credibility, we are calling on the Government to announce practical steps, including a binding timetable of aid increases, and to copperfasten its aid commitment in legislation”* concluded Zomer.

/ENDS/

### Notes for the Editor

- First Irish promise: in the 1970s, Ireland signed up to a UN call to spend 0.7% of its GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the end of the decade.
- Second promise: In 2000, then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern committed Ireland to reaching the UN target for spending 0.7% of our GNI on ODA – or overseas aid – by 2007.
- Third promise: At the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern committed Ireland to reaching the UN target for spending 0.7% of our GNP on overseas aid by 2012 at the latest.
- The 2009 budget for overseas aid was €696 million, down 24% (€224 million) from the previous year.
- The 2010 budget for overseas aid works out as €671 million.
- The Government had set interim targets “against which our progress towards the target can be measured”.
  - The interim target set for 2010 was 0.6% of GNI.
  - The cut in the 2010 aid budget (€25million) means that Ireland's aid effort works out at around 0.52%, well short of the target set by the Government.
- The Government has, to date, not formulated a strategy, or set any interim targets for its achievement of the 0.7% level by 2015.
- A summary of the OECD projections is available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/20/19/44607047.pdf>

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**Dóchas** is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 44 members, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

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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
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34. Skillshare International Ireland
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