

## DOCHAS

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

### PRESS RELEASE

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*Irish NGOs welcome positive findings about Ireland's aid programme*

## **Overseas aid is not charity, say Irish NGOs, as OECD calls for more joined-up approach to extreme poverty**

The members of Dóchas today welcomed an independent review of Ireland's overseas aid programme that commended the high quality of Ireland's international aid programme.

Undertaken by experts from the OECD, the report shows that Ireland's aid is making a crucial difference to the lives of millions of marginalised people: it is flexible, effective, and it is focused on the poorest countries. The report states that Ireland's aid is highly targeted on social sectors and emergency relief that directly helps poor people.

Commenting on the report, Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, the umbrella body of overseas development and humanitarian organisations, said:

“People in Ireland have reason to be proud of our international aid programme. Today's report from the OECD shows that our reputation abroad is heavily influenced by our willingness to help the poorest and most vulnerable people on Earth.

Today's report can be added to a long list of documents that illustrates that overseas aid is working, and that it pays for Ireland to continue to invest in international development cooperation”.

In its report, the OECD highlights that Ireland's overseas aid programme is of a very high quality.

However, in its review, the OECD criticises Ireland for a lack of joint-up thinking when it comes to eradicating extreme poverty. It says that Ireland does not have enough evidence of how other, non-aid, policies impact on poor countries, and no clear processes for identifying and managing conflicts or trade-offs between its aid policy and other government policies in the area of agriculture, trade, taxation, migration, fisheries, energy, health care, climate etc.

The report also voices concern about Ireland's plan towards achieving the UN target of 0.7% Gross National Product on overseas aid.

Following several substantial budget cuts, Ireland's aid volume declined by 30% between 2008 and 2013 and the ratio of ODA to GNI fell from a peak of 0.59% in 2008 to 0.45% in 2013.

"The OECD report notes that the Government claims to remain committed to achieving the UN target of 0.7% ODA/GNI but it has not produced a strategy on how to achieve this commitment, nor has it in the words of the OECD, 'explained what level of economic improvement would trigger an increase in development assistance.' Irish NGOs are now urgently asking the Government to set strong, credible key annual targets, towards achieving our promise to the world's poorest people" added Hans Zomer.

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### **Media Contact**

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### **Notes to the Editor**

- The OECD DAC peer review is a mechanism by which experts from the OECD member states critically assess the quality of a country's development cooperation programme. The policies and practices of each member states are reviewed approximately every 4-5 years.
- Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its members, and a platform for them to speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie)