

PRESS STATEMENT

26 September 2008

Development NGO Budget Submission

NGOs encourage government to maintain Irish leadership role in fight against global poverty

On the day that An Taoiseach Brian Cowen attended a UN summit on global poverty, thirty-nine Irish Development NGOs and aid agencies called on the government to demonstrate their commitment to making poverty history, by delivering on Ireland's promise to invest in overseas development.

The members of Dóchas presented their Budget Submission to Minister Brian Lenihan yesterday.

Presenting the submission, Hans Zomer of Dóchas said:

“The New York summit demonstrated that the need for ambitious and concrete action to eradicate poverty is greater than ever. The scandal of 800 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, and of millions of children dying of preventable diseases cannot be allowed to continue. In the year that the UN Secretary-General wants to be a year of ‘unprecedented progress for the poorest of the poor, the track record of broken promises and failed political will cannot continue.”

In their submission, Ireland's Development NGOs are calling on the government to:

- Continue to make progress towards the 0.7% by 2012 target and to build on domestic and international support for Ireland's positive role in the world;
- Commit to immediately introducing legislation to safeguard Ireland's continued commitment to spend at least 0.7% of GNP annually on overseas development aid from 2012 onwards;
- Ensure adequate structures, systems and resources to deliver efficient and effective development cooperation programmes for maximum impact on the lives of the world's poor;
- Provide the resources and political drive to strengthen Policy Coherence for Development across Departments and State agencies;

- Contribute to the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through targeted, transparent and effective spending on social sectors in developing countries, and through creating an enabling environment by its actions at Irish, EU and international levels;
- Invest in mechanisms, such as development education, which encourage a deepened civic engagement with issues of global poverty and inequality.

“An Taoiseach Brian Cowen has made clear that the Government places a high premium on ensuring that it protects the vulnerable from any cuts in public spending. The vulnerable certainly include those living in poverty and inequality overseas, and aid from Ireland is making genuine differences in those people’s lives. Any adjustments in Irish public spending must put a high priority on protecting the lives and opportunities of the world’s poor” said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas.

“Ireland’s overseas aid spending is making a real difference in reducing poverty and inequality in some of the world’s poorest countries – a goal shared by over 850,000 people who support Dóchas member aid agencies. With Ireland’s assistance, thousands of people have access to school, health services and HIV drugs; thousands more have access to humanitarian assistance in disaster situations” stated Zomer.

[ENDS]

The full text of the Dóchas submission is available at http://www.dochas.ie/documents/Budget_Submission2008.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 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